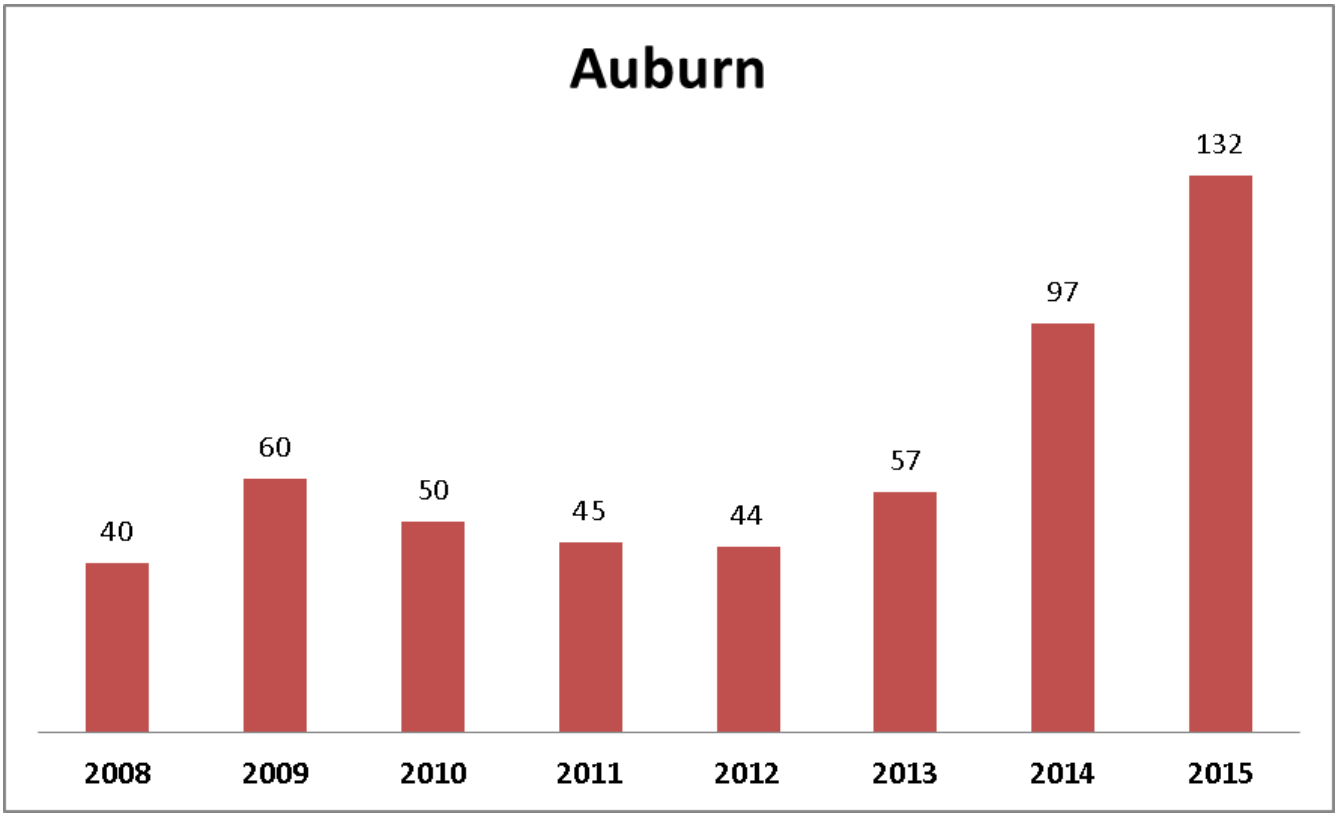
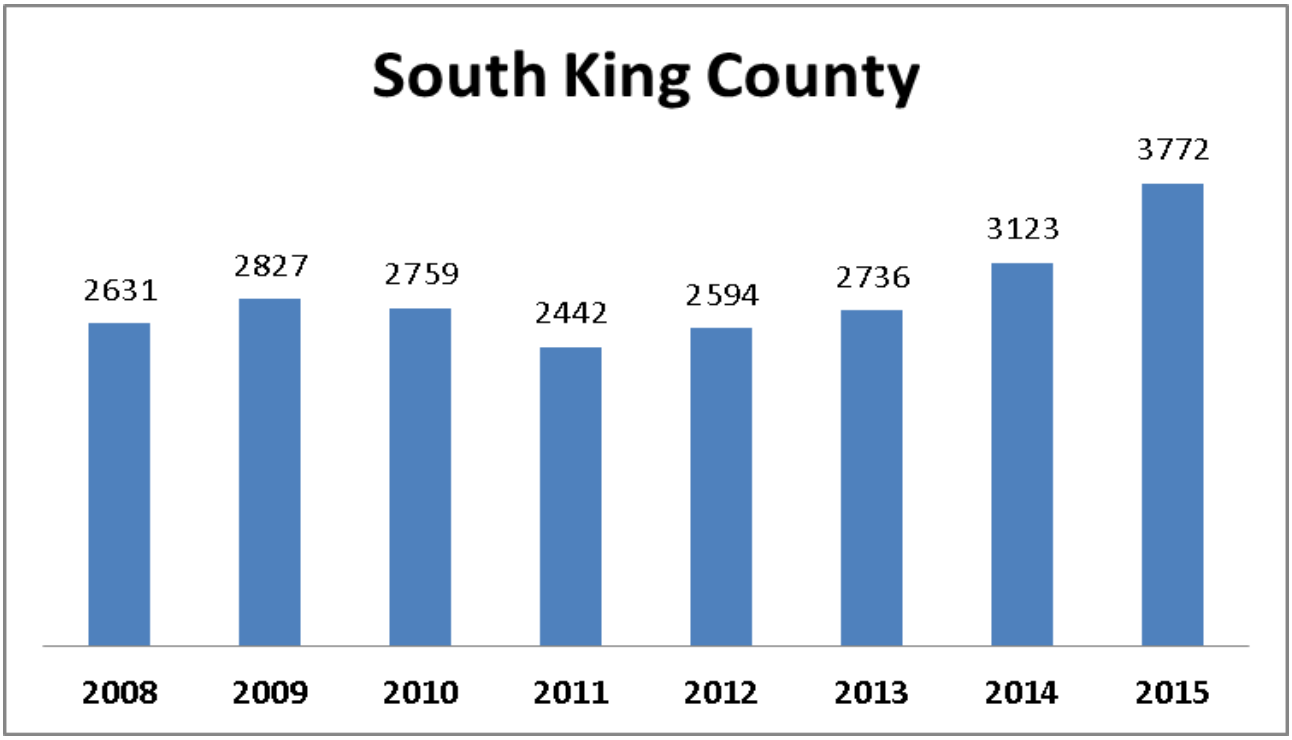
One Night Count Data for South King County and Auburn 2008-2015





**The annual One Night County takes place at the end of January on the coldest night of the year from 2:00-5:00am. A street count of people who are homeless, without shelter and staying outside, in vehicles or in makeshift shelters.*

**Data is from the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness*

Table 3: Summary of 2008 Unsheltered (Street) Count in Selected Areas of King County

	SEATTLE	KENT	NORTH END	EAST SIDE	WHITE CTR	FEDERAL WAY	RENTON	NIGHT OWL BUSES	AUBURN	TOTAL
Men	665	15	11	69	1	18	12	150	5	**946**
Women	141	4	3	12	1	8	1	19	1	**190**
Gender Unknown	1,158	44	20	70	56	63	31	0	34	**1,476**
Minor (under 18)	12	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	**19**
TOTAL	**1,976**	**65**	**34**	**153**	**58**	**90**	**44**	**171**	**40**	**2,631**
Benches	12	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	**15**
Parking Garages	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**12**
Cars/Trucks	652	36	17	41	54	33	18	0	30	**881**
Structures	212	1	4	10	2	35	0	0	2	**266**
Under Roadways	156	8	0	5	0	7	5	0	4	**185**
Doorways	140	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	**145**
City Parks	28	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	**32**
Bushes/ Undergrowth	52	4	2	6	0	2	13	0	0	**79**
Bus Stops	49	1	2	0	1	1	3	0	0	**57**
Alleys	25	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	**32**
Walking Around	399	5	3	9	0	7	4	0	3	**430**
Other	239	10	2	71	0	4	0	171	0	**497**
TOTAL	**1,976**	**65**	**34**	**153**	**58**	**90**	**44**	**171**	**40**	**2,631**

Summary of the 2009 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	693	17	11	77	2	25	11	139	20	**995**
Women	174	6	2	16	0	2	3	30	13	**246**
Gender unknown	1101	170	10	64	37	89	74	0	26	**1571**
Minor (under 18)	9	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	**15**
Total	1977	193	23	158	39	116	90	171	60	**2827**
Benches	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**12**
Parking Garages	11	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**14**
Cars/Trucks	513	126	11	45	29	34	51	0	43	**852**
Structures	215	5	1	4	6	46	8	0	13	**298**
Under roadways	242	30	0	9	0	2	6	0	3	**292**
Doorways	161	0	0	4	0	2	3	0	0	**170**
City Parks	30	2	0	1	0	0	14	0	0	**47**
Bushes/Undergrowth	72	7	9	0	1	1	1	0	0	**91**
Bus stops	35	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	**39**
Alleys	14	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	**18**
Walking Around	308	13	1	9	1	6	3	0	0	**341**
Other	364	6	1	85	2	20	3	171	1	**653**
Total	1977	193	23	158	39	116	90	171	60	**2827**

2% increase when comparing similar count areas

2009	**2685**	**(without new areas)**
2008	**2631**	

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3148 or (206) 349-0350 (cell)
Josh Okrent (206) 957-8076 or (585) 734-8130 (cell)
Nicole Macri (206) 313-3751 (cell)

These are final figures for all 2009 Count areas. This summary corrects preliminary data released originally 1/30/09. **Prepared 2/2/09**

Summary of the 2010 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	640	8	4	82	5	13	9	149	9	**919**
Women	115	0	0	15	1	7	3	14	4	**159**
Gender unknown	1219	52	41	44	41	158	70	2	37	**1664**
Minor (under 18)	12	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	**17**
Total	1986	60	45	141	47	181	84	165	50	**2759**
Benches	38	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	**42**
Parking Garages	6	2	0	1	0	2	8	0	0	**19**
Cars/Trucks	590	28	30	31	31	123	27	0	31	**891**
Structures	261	0	2	6	4	29	10	0	4	**316**
Under roadways	163	8	0	6	0	1	10	0	3	**191**
Doorways	128	0	0	1	2	0	5	0	0	**136**
City Parks	97	0	1	1	0	4	7	0	4	**114**
Bushes/Undergrowth	76	16	9	6	1	12	3	0	6	**129**
Bus stops	21	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	0	**28**
Alleys	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**16**
Walking Around	310	3	1	4	0	7	5	0	1	**331**
Other	280	1	1	83	8	3	4	165	1	**546**
Total	1986	60	45	141	47	181	84	165	50	**2759**

5% decrease when comparing similar count areas

2010	**2675**	**(without new areas)**
2009	**2827**	

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3148 or (206) 349-0350 (cell)
Nicole Macri (206) 313-3751 (cell)
Josh Okrent (206) 957-8076 or (585) 734-8130 (cell)

Summary of the 2011 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	620	26	2	83	6	13	13	93	4	**860**
Women	144	6	0	22	0	2	3	13	1	**191**
Gender unknown	957	76	33	40	48	109	54	0	40	**1357**
Minor (under 18)	32	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	**34**
Total	1753	108	35	146	54	124	71	106	45	**2442**
Benches	18	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	**21**
Parking Garages	21	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**23**
Cars/Trucks	506	60	28	30	48	35	39	0	21	**767**
Structures	196	8	1	7	2	27	8	0	0	**249**
Under roadways	174	7	0	4	0	0	10	0	1	**196**
Doorways	121	1	2	0	0	3	4	0	0	**131**
City Parks	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	**25**
Bushes/Undergrowth	66	13	2	0	0	7	1	0	0	**89**
Bus stops	18	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	16	**42**
Alleys	15	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**21**
Walking Around	234	7	2	7	4	3	4	0	0	**261**
Other	364	4	0	89	0	47	5	106	2	**617**
Total	1753	108	35	146	54	124	71	106	45	**2442**

11% decrease when comparing similar count areas

2011	**2442**	**(without new areas)**
2010	**2759**	

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3148

Summary of the 2012 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	571	71	12	62	2	8	15	137	4	**882**
Women	117	0	2	14	3	2	2	34	0	**174**
Gender unknown	1207	32	17	62	50	67	56	0	40	**1531**
Minor (under 18)	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	**7**
Total	1898	104	31	138	55	77	73	174	44	**2594**
Benches	20	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	**23**
Parking Garages	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Cars/Trucks	519	36	18	52	29	48	55	0	34	**791**
Structures	289	13	0	6	21	16	3	0	0	**348**
Under roadways	132	19	0	4	0	2	4	0	2	**163**
Doorways	143	2	3	0	1	0	3	0	2	**154**
City Parks	25	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	**30**
Bushes/Undergrowth	50	16	0	4	0	3	2	0	2	**77**
Bus stops	22	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**24**
Alleys	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**14**
Walking Around	272	8	4	3	3	6	3	0	1	**300**
Other	408	9	2	67	1	2	1	174	1	**665**
Total	1898	104	31	138	55	77	73	174	44	**2594**

3% increase when comparing similar count areas

2012	**2514**	**(without new areas)**
2011	**2442**	

6% increase when comparing 2012 count total to 2011 count total

2012	**2594**	**(includes new areas)**
2011	**2442**	

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3148 or (206) 349-0350 (cell)
Nicole Macri (206) 313-3751 (cell)

Summary of the 2013 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	597	7	68	96	4	31	22	66	6	**897**
Women	133	3	21	26	0	4	2	14	2	**205**
Gender unknown	1241	43	17	75	47	83	59	1	49	**1615**
Minor (under 18)	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**19**
Total	1989	53	106	197	51	118	83	82	57	**2736**
Benches	11	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	**16**
Parking Garages	22	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	**28**
Cars/Trucks	631	8	14	52	31	78	37	0	27	**878**
Structures	292	4	3	8	16	15	11	0	4	**353**
Under roadways	194	8	2	6	0	2	8	0	5	**225**
Doorways	139	13	0	5	2	1	2	0	1	**163**
City Parks	5	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	**23**
Bushes/Undergrowth	69	3	0	8	0	0	2	0	6	**88**
Bus stops	32	0	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	**40**
Alleys	46	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**48**
Walking Around	257	6	6	7	2	18	8	0	1	**305**
Other	291	1	76	109	0	0	7	82	3	**569**
Total	1989	53	106	197	51	118	83	82	57	**2736**

2% increase

2013	**2657**	**(without new areas)**
2012	**2594**	

5% increase

2013	**2736**	**(includes new areas)**
2012	**2594**	

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3147 or alison@homelessinfo.org
Nicole Macri (206) 515-1514

Summary of the 2014 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	White Cntr	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Total
Men	619	30	70	70	14	28	16	92	5	**944**
Women	143	3	25	25	1	3	2	11	0	**213**
Gender unknown	1527	30	20	83	29	81	78	2	92	**1942**
Minor (under 18)	14	0	0	0	2	1	0	7	0	**24**
Total	2303	63	115	178	46	113	96	112	97	**3123**
Benches	51	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	**56**
Parking Garages	14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**15**
Cars/Trucks	730	19	16	65	12	55	47	0	49	**993**
Structures	357	8	0	10	21	4	7	0	2	**409**
Under roadways	228	1	0	6	0	3	6	0	5	**249**
Doorways	206	10	0	3	0	2	7	0	0	**228**
City Parks	54	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	27	**88**
Bushes/Undergrowth	64	3	5	2	2	19	19	0	4	**118**
Bus stops	22	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	**26**
Alleys	43	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**47**
Walking Around	244	12	5	2	7	18	5	0	9	**302**
Other	290	1	89	90	0	8	1	112	1	**592**
Total	2303	63	115	178	46	113	96	112	97	**3123**

14%	**increase**	
2014	**3123**	**people outside**
2013	2736	people outside

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 357- 3147 **Nicole Macri (206) 515-1514**

Summary of the 2015 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	Seattle	Kent	North End	East Side	SW County**	Fed. Way	Renton	Night Owl Buses	Auburn	Vashon Island**	Total
Men	695	21	7	48	69	13	20	96	22	2	**993**
Women	165	6	1	24	14	4	1	10	5	0	**230**
Gender unknown	1944	101	40	55	126	88	58	0	98	8	**2518**
Minor (under 18)	9	7	0	7	0	0	0	1	7	0	**31**
Total	2813	135	48	134	209	105	79	107	132	10	**3772**
Benches	35	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	**40**
Parking Garages	31	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	**42**
Cars/Trucks	776	44	32	18	88	81	37	0	54	8	**1138**
Structures	641	11	8	2	38	3	10	0	19	0	**732**
Under roadways	173	6	0	10	0	0	7	0	4	0	**200**
Doorways	306	3	0	1	4	4	3	0	0	0	**321**
City Parks	47	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	10	0	**61**
Bushes/Undergrowth	94	28	1	10	4	6	6	0	31	0	**180**
Bus stops	32	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	**38**
Alleys	26	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	**31**
Walking Around	303	19	4	2	21	8	6	0	11	1	**375**
Other	349	21	1	76	48	1	8	107	2	1	**614**
Total	2813	135	48	134	209	105	79	107	132	10	**3772**

21%	**Increase**	
2015	**3772**	**people outside**
2014	**3123**	**people outside**

****Vashon Island and Southwest King County are participating in the count for the first time in 2015.**

****The number of people observed in SW King County includes the 89 people counted in White Center, historically reported separately.**

For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness **www.homelessinfo.org**

Alison Eisinger (206) 204-8355 **Nicole Macri (206) 515-1514**

Used by gracious permission of the artist.
Copyright 2014 by Jenny Holzer, members
Artists Rights Society, New York.

Agenda

- Coalition on Homelessness
- 30-years of the Homelessness Crisis
- Housing Market in SKC
- Homelessness in King County
- Next steps

The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness is an independent coalition of **organizations**, **local governments**, **public housing authorities**, **religious congregations**, **advocacy groups**, and **individuals**, some of whom are homeless, who work every night and day to ensure safety and survival for people while they are homeless.

Member organizations provide **shelter** and **survival services**, **transitional housing**, and **permanent**, **supported housing** to the men, women, and children who are homeless in King County.

Our members' direct knowledge and experience informs the Coalition's perspective and priorities.

Founded in 1979
Oldest homeless coalition in the United States

Select Coalition Activities

Organize and mobilize our supporters and members, and educate ourselves, our elected officials, and the general public

- **Advocacy and Organizing**: **One Night Count (since 1980!)**, *Homelessness Advocacy 101* workshops
- **Supporting Students who are Homeless:** Project Cool for Back-to-School, *Helping Homeless Students* workshop, *Understanding Homeless Students' Educational Rights* brochure
- **Homeless Voting Rights**: Voter Registration, Education, and Engagement, *You Don't Have to Have a House to Vote* brochure
- **Budget Advocacy** at the local, state, and federal levels
- **Training and Professional Development** for service providers

30-years of the Homelessness Crisis: Two trends largely responsible for rise

1. **Growing shortage of affordable rental housing**
2. **Simultaneous increase in poverty**, attributable to:
   - eroding employment opportunities for large segments of the workforce; stagnant or falling incomes and less secure jobs which offer fewer benefits
   - declining value and availability of public assistance

OTHER FACTORS INCLUDE

- **Lack of Affordable Health Care**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Mental Illness**
- **Addiction Disorders**

SOURCE: National Coalition for the Homeless

Common Health Problems and Homelessness

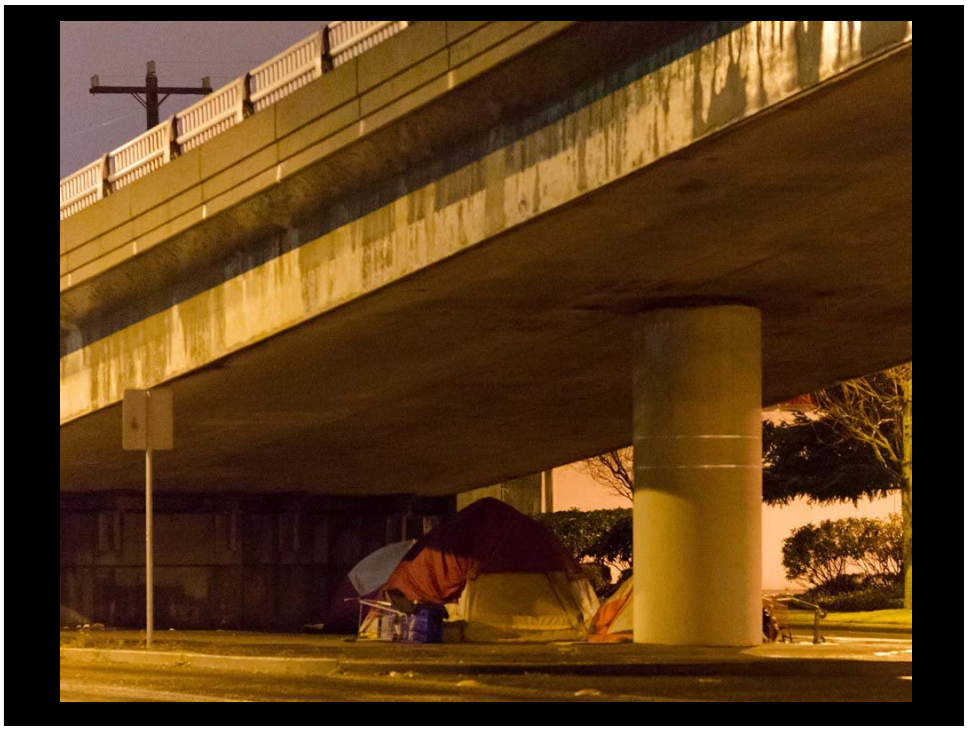
- **People's health care issues can both contribute to and exacerbate homelessness**
  - *Health care bills still remain a major cause of bankruptcy, which can lead to homelessness.*
  - About **25% of the homelessness population has serious mental illness**
- **It's hard to treat your illness when your on the street or trying to follow the rules of being in shelter**
  - True if your sickness is caused by cancer, a pain medication addiction, or schizophrenia

SOURCE: National Alliance to End Homelessness

Housed → Homeless

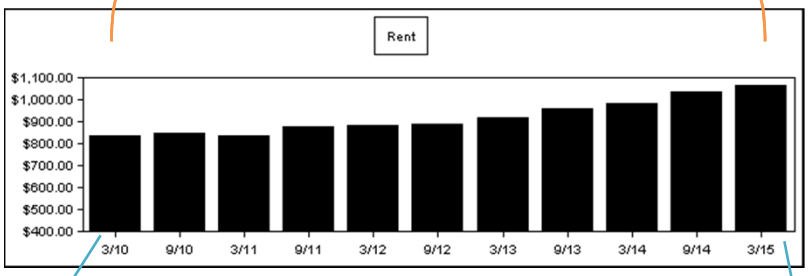
- **#1 Culprit of Homelessness is the inability to find and secure affordable housing**
- **Housing Affordability** = no more than *30%* of monthly income going toward housing costs
- To afford Fair Market Rent for a 1bdrm apartment in King County while making minimum wage (9.47/hr), a person would need to work 93 hrs/wk

SOURCES: National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH); National Low Income Housing Coalition



Rental Market Trends for SKC

27% ↑ in cost of rent since 2010



64.1% offering incentives

5.8% offering incentives

SOURCE: © 2015 Dupre + Scott Apartment Advisors

Average Rental Market in SKC

- a closer look -

UNIT SIZE	SOUTH KING COUNTY	SUBSET "HIGHER PRICED" ZIP CODES
1 Bedroom	$ 915	$ 970
2 Bedrooms	$ 1,115	$ 1,170
3 Bedrooms	$ 1,485	$ 1,520

FOR REFERENCE . . .

- A person earning min. wage in WA can "afford" $492/mo in rent
- A person earning 30% KC Area Median Income can "afford" $672/mo in rent
- A single mom with 2 kids receiving TANF (welfare) benefits receives $478/mo
- A disable person receiving SSDI benefits receives $773/mo

SOURCE: © 2015 Dupre + Scott Apartment Advisors

Homelessness Data: Two (of many) Sources

1. One Night Count (ONC) of people who are homeless
   - Point-in-Time (or PIT) Count
2. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

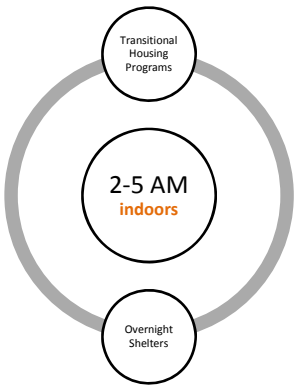
OTHER LOCAL SOURCES

All Home KC – shares general and population-specific info on a regular basis and in greater detail

Count Us In – complementary to the One Night Count; a deep dive of youth and young adult housing instability and homelessness

ONC: The count of people who are homeless in KC

Sheltered (indoors) Count
people who are homeless in either overnight shelters or transitional housing programs



+

Unsheltered Count
People who are homeless outside without shelter

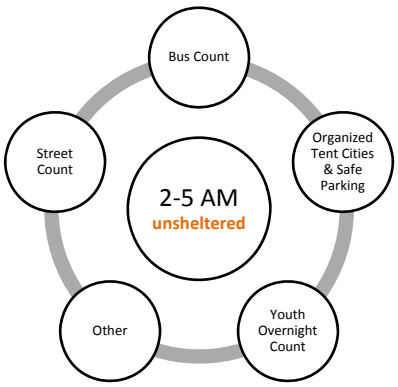


Photo: Joe Iano for the Coalition on Homelessness

ONC: Who counts as homeless, and who doesn't

Who counts as homeless during the One Night Count?
As defined by HUD, people who:

- lack fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residences;
- are in a shelter or transitional living situation designed to be temporary;
- or are in a public or private place not meant to be a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Who is NOT counted as homeless during the One Night Count?

- doubled up or couch surfing
- motel that night
- children in foster care
- in hospital
- in jail
- those in unstable situations but who *on that night* are not homeless

The total count is thus a bare minimum.

ONC: Brief Methods of the Street Count

This unique project is grounded in the daily and nightly work of our members

- Draws on the knowledge of service providers, people who live and work in the communities where they count, and people who have been or are homeless
- The Coalition organizes **1100 volunteers** into over **130 teams** to carry out the Unsheltered ("Street") Count
- Core of **experienced Team Captains** lead teams year after year; Captains receive training, and preview their assigned areas in daylight before the Count
- Teams go to **pre-determined** and **publicly accessible** areas where people who are homeless are known to seek shelter
- Parts of **Auburn** (2008), Bellevue, Bothell, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Seattle, Shoreline, Skyway, Vashon Island, White Center, and Woodinville
- Counting happens between **2-5 AM in order to avoid duplication**
  - NOTE: We do NOT wake people up!

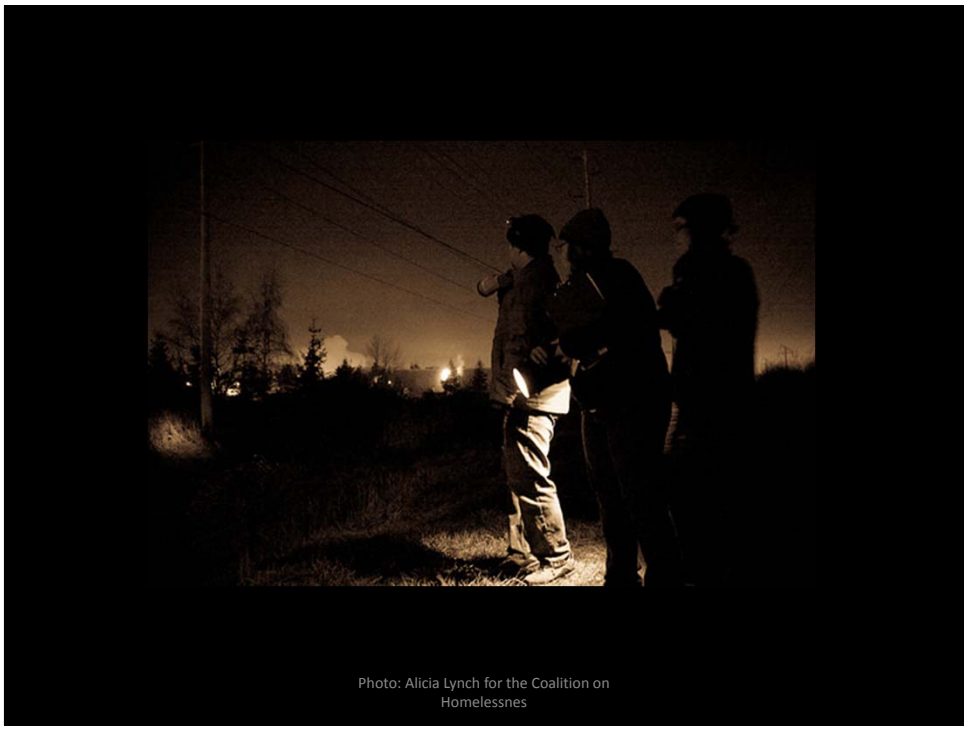
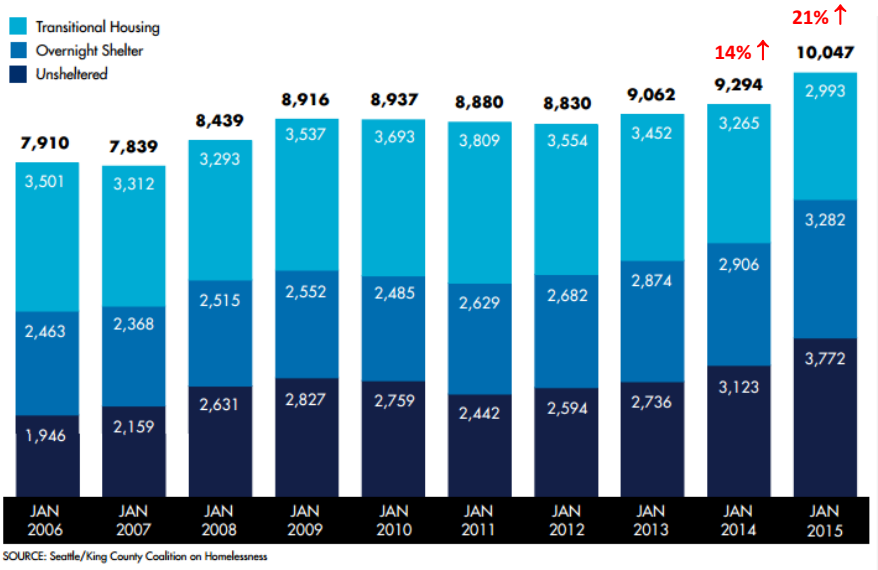


Photo: Alicia Lynch for the Coalition on Homelessnes

ONC: Results from 2015

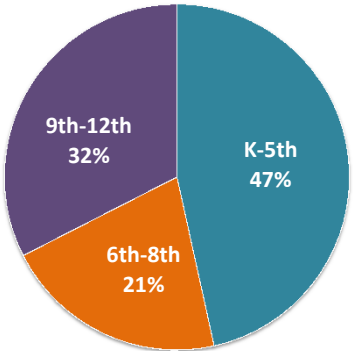
ONC: Results from 2006 – 2015 (KC)



Students Identified as Homeless in the 2013-2014 School Year

Washington State	32,539 = 1 in 34 (6% ↑ from prior year)
King County ***	6,450 (4% ↑ from prior year)
Auburn School District	210 (17% ↑ from prior year)

*** Students Identified as Homeless in KC Public Schools by GRADE



SOURCE: OSPI

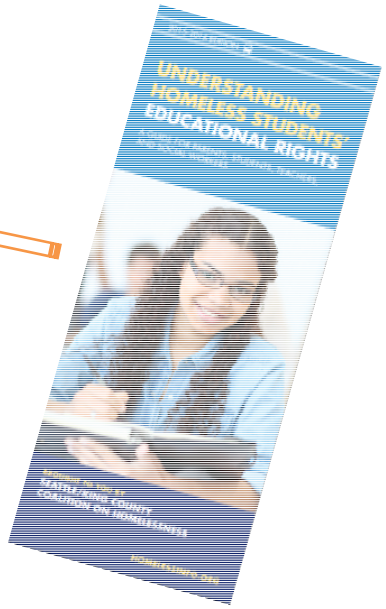
McKinney-Vento Liaisons

AUBURN
Dennis Grad
Tranportation Director, McKinney-Vento Liaison
dgrad@auburn.wednet.edu
(253) 931-4938

Vicki Jenson
McKinney-Vento Program Router
vjenson@auburn.wednet.edu
(253) 931-4938

Kyle Carrier
Administrative Assistant
kcarrier@auburn.wednet.edu
(253) 931-4938

Pam Craft
Office Manager
pcraft@auburn.wednet.edu
(253) 931-4938



Responding to the Crisis of Homelessness

- Every community must grapple with this on-going crisis
- People want and need help, and that will look different
- We need to meet people where they are

Please contact the Coalition for more information:
Alison Eisinger // alison@homelessinfo.org
Rebecca Roy // rebecca@homelessinfo.org

SEATTLE/KING COUNTY COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

WWW.HOMELESSINFO.ORG

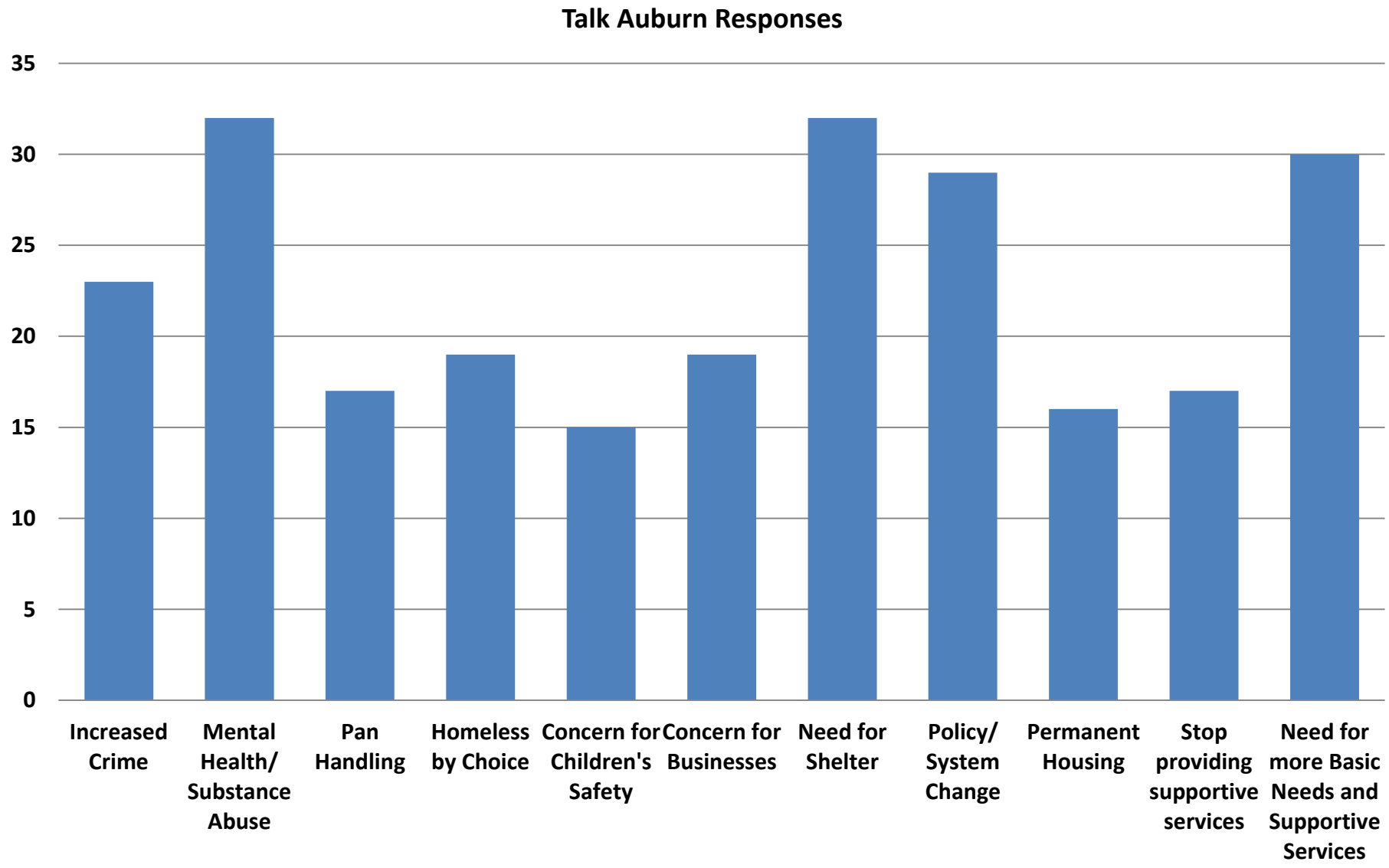
Resources

http://nlihc.org/oor/washington
http://EndHomelessness.org
http://nationalhomeless.org
http://wliha.org

Talk Auburn

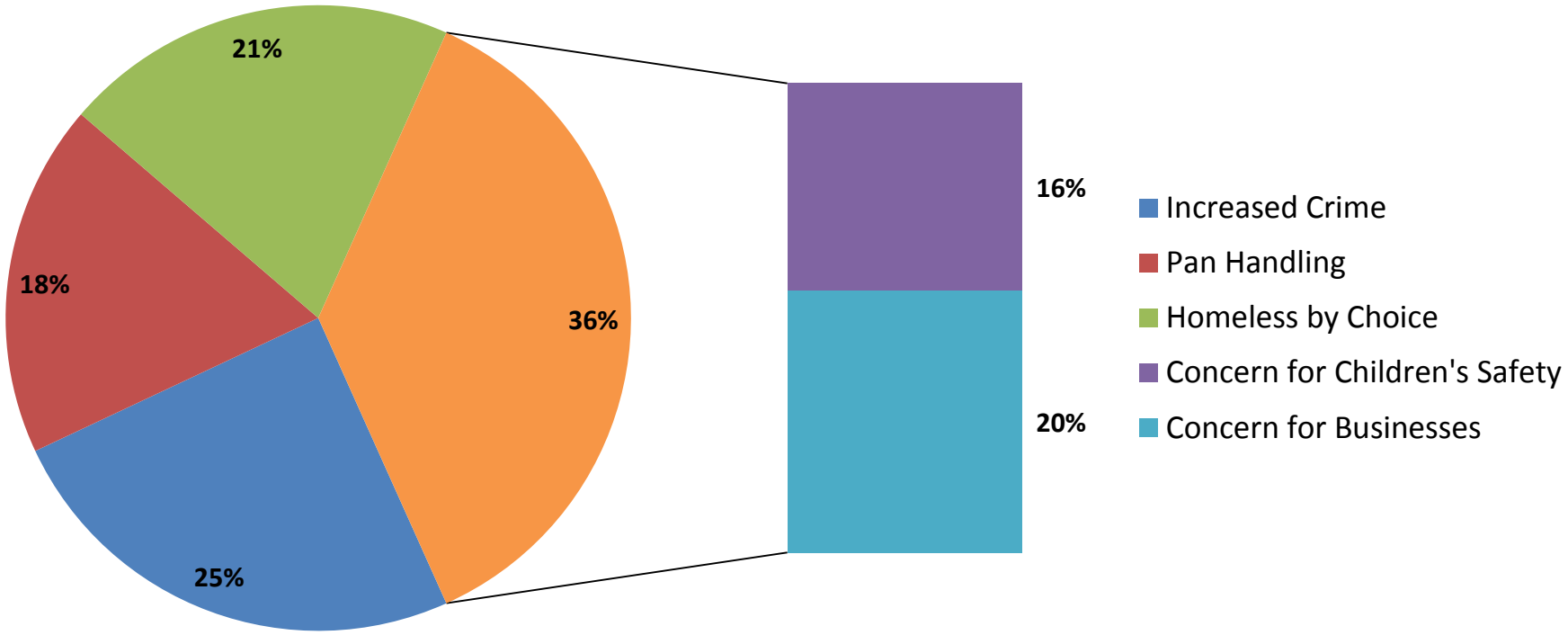
Auburn's online forum for civic engagement.

- Topic: Homelessness in Auburn
- Start date: June 1, 2015
- Attendees **594**
- Forum Responses **67**
- Questions
  - What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
  - What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?



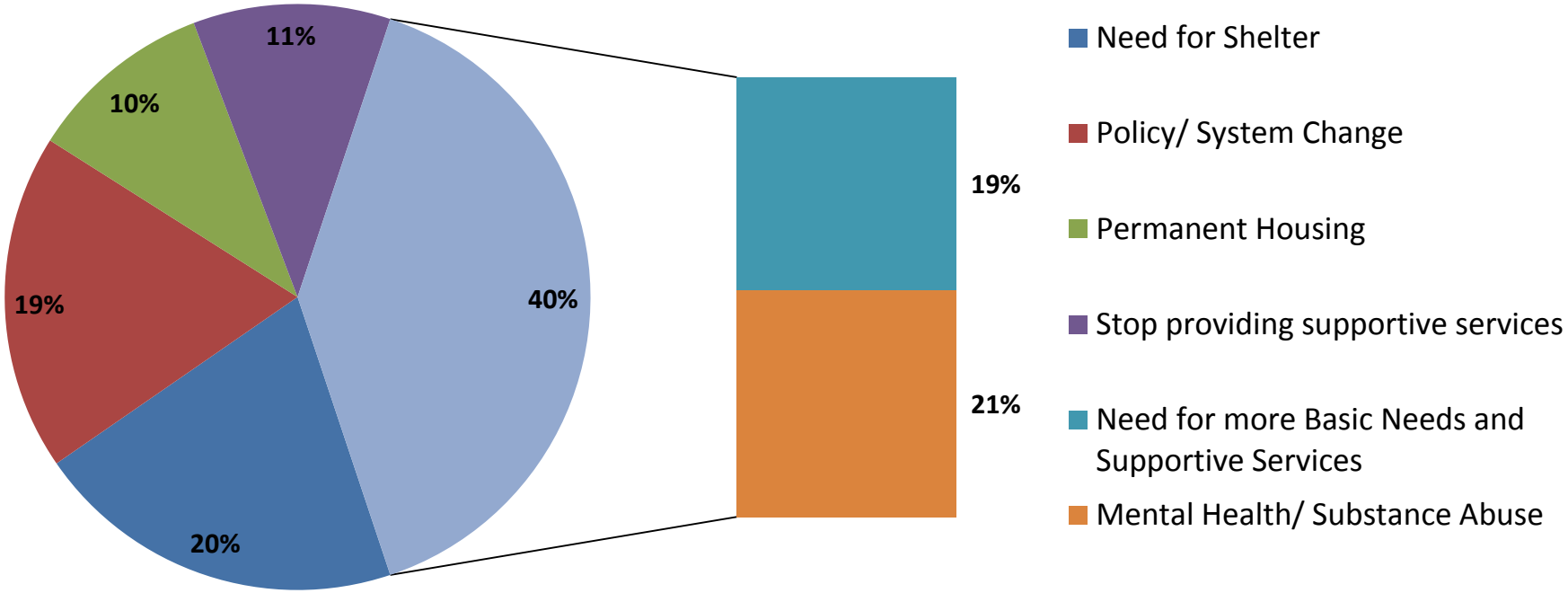
Several responses provided more than one concern or suggestion.

Community Concerns and Obervations



**Concern for businesses include comments from business owners and residents who no longer visit businesses due to the increase of homeless individuals.*

Suggested Solutions



*Suggestions of shelter included tent cities, emergency shelters, safe parking programs and day centers.

*Basic needs and supportive services include but aren't limited to employment, education, food, clothing, and healthcare.

All On Forum Responses sorted chronologically

As of November 6, 2015, 10:16 AM

As with any public comment process, participation in TalkAuburn is voluntary. The responses in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.

There has been some recent dialog on how we should address the homeless issue in Auburn. We would like to hear your thoughts on this issue.

As of November 6, 2015, 10:16 AM, this forum had:

Attendees: 594

On Forum Responses: 67

Hours of Public Comment: 6.5

This topic started on June 1, 2015, 5:49 PM.

Pamela Basquez inside Auburn October 23, 2015, 5:39 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I've been an Auburn resident for twenty eight years. I've helped our homeless population too many times to count. Homelessness has become so prevalent here. We desperately need collaborative solutions to make Auburn a better and safer community for everyone.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Drug addicts, criminals and mentally ill people are not "typical" examples of homelessness. Due to their antics, these groups are just more noticeable. These populations are the neediest, scariest and most difficult to help. Helping them requires so much more than handouts or a call to 911. State level effort is needed and should be provided to find consistent solutions for these populations throughout Washington.

Many of our homeless have traversed devastating circumstances. Maybe there was an illness or job loss or domestic violence or who knows what type of catastrophe. Maybe they just couldn't afford to pay the bills or had to choose between medicine and the high cost of rent! Life is traumatic when you are very poor.

We don't need to be critical or judge them – this tactic is meant only to console self-absorbed people searching for excuses not help. As flawed as their lives may be, homeless people are human beings faced with an abysmal plight. We need to be morally responsible for doing whatever we can within our means to help our less fortunate citizens achieve self-sufficiency. At the very least, they deserve to be treated as well as we treat our imprisoned populations.

I'd like to envision Auburn becoming a front runner, focused on restoring lives by enabling homeless people to get up through self-sufficiency strategies. We need to create an infrastructure to build self-sufficiency and self- esteem. This infrastructure needs to be established by our community businesses, churches, non-profits, educators, life coaches, case workers, volunteers etc. It really will "take a village" working together to have any major impact on our homeless population's plight.

To expand on my vision, I'd like to see someplace like the old drive-in theaters or a large abandoned farm turned into a permanent multi-resource center for the needy. Homeless people that want to use this resource will in return agree to abide by established guidelines, including keeping their children in school and doing some voluntary service work in exchange for the food, clothing, shelter and services. This resource center should be capable of generating funds to offset the operational costs.

I imagine: a large farm developed in Auburn's fertile valley complete with housing and amenities. People living there could gain beneficial experience using farming and landscaping tools and equipment. They could grow plants and produce to eat and sell for profit. They could prepare meals, operate a coffee stand/café and open it to the public. Others could do housekeeping chores, run their laundry service, operate a clothing bank and thrift store, sew and make alterations, provide daycare for each other and so forth, finding ways to meet each other's needs. Teach them basic computer literacy and give them a place to study and develop social skills. Teach them how to budget. These things would help prepare them for many entry level employment opportunities. Local businesses could create a hiring incentive program to assist residents ready for transition.

Desperate people really wanting help would be eager to sign up and thankful for the opportunity, appreciating a safe place to eat, sleep, bathe and do laundry without fear…and if they can gain a few skills, even better! Of course, there will be some that won't want to participate. I prefer to think ahead to the positive outcomes for those who will.

The possibilities are many if we open our hearts and minds to these very real and extensive needs and then respond with enough provision to complete successful transitions. We are capable of improving their quality of life significantly. The question is, Will we? Will we make a steadfast commitment to do what's right instead of choosing the cheapest or easiest fix?

I'm reminded of, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish and …"

Betsy Bone Kirichenko inside Auburn October 22, 2015, 1:49 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
They frequent our neighbor hood using it as a traffic way in between places and there is vandalism of yards an stolen property from yards all the time. The pan handling and people who approach vehicles are frightening and I do not feel safe at times when I shop in my own I go elsewhere to shop.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
There needs to be someone willing to work with these individuals up close and personal. We need a homeless shelter and lobbying for better mental health care and funding for homelessness.

Name not shown inside Auburn October 4, 2015, 9:23 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I've heard that Seattle Police are "notorious for picking up Seattle's homeless and dropping them off down south...they used to drop them off in Des Moines, now I guess they drop them in Auburn"

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Maybe check with the city of Des Moines to find out how they stopped being a dumping location.

Jeff Strahan inside Auburn September 7, 2015, 3:09 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I see them as they seek assistance around town and come through White River Estates to make their way to the river and their camps.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I'd like to be involved in any meetings regarding this issue. I attended a 20 year plan meeting at the library and was sorry to see how divided the community is over this. Even though homelessness wasn't on the agenda, it was the only thing anyone wanted to discuss.
If we, as residents of this fine city, don't begin dialog about how to create a proactive plan to prevent homelessness, then we're destined to polarize over what to do about the growing ranks of homeless, and the crime that inevitably follows a policy of denial and failure to address this...not that I'm accusing anyone of failure to act or plan.

Name not shown outside Auburn September 4, 2015, 10:41 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have actually gone down and spoken with many of the people that are homeless. They have always been friendly and never been rude. Homelessness and drug addiction are 2 different issues and should be treated as such. Your homeless individuals are not your drug dealers (who are the real issue). They are a victim of their own circumstances and need a helping hand up not a freebee.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Stop treating them all as if they are not human. They have parents, siblings, friends that do love them and may not even know the situation. There are zero resources for the homeless in Auburn. You have to go to Kent, Puyallup, Tacoma, Renton, Seattle. Come on they are homeless they do not have the ability to get there. Life is about Love and Compassion. Maybe we should all work together and make the situation better. It is going to take everyone. The government and police can not do it on their own. If someone is breaking the law then by all means, punish them. If someone is looking for a warm place to sleep, Jail is not the answer. That is for the real criminals not the homeless!

Name not shown inside Auburn August 10, 2015, 10:13 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I see homeless people and drug deals happening in open view near Les Gove Park, Library and Berkshire Glen Parks on Lea Hill and new bird sancutary area.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I love the events provided at the parks and library in the summer but, I do not feel comfortable taking little ones in tow there do to the drug and homeless issues. I no longer feel safe walking in my neighborhood as I have experienced two break-ins in the past year and so have most of my neighbors. We often witness drug use and deals in our neighborhood. My input is we need to start making this real problem a priority to be dealt with or drug users and homeless people will be the only one using our wonderful facilities. I do not advocate providing more facilities for these individuals to misuse.

Name not shown inside Auburn August 6, 2015, 7:14 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Sleeping on property. Office opens at 8am. Man sleeping in our doorway when I show up at 730am. They also pee in our plants. I hate it!

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Get them out of Auburn!! Out! Out! Out!!

Name not shown inside Auburn August 6, 2015, 3:09 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have quit walking at Les Gove Park and don't take my grandkids as often as it feels "uncomfortable". I don't like to go to the Safeway store after dark, because of all the homeless activity, theft, and begging I've witnessed. Also, I had a homeless man break into our house and fall asleep on our couch a year ago. A very scary experience!

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I just don't know. It seems the more we do to help, the more the problem grows. I want to have compassion, but I feel like our town is being taken over by vagrant activity. It seems so much of the problem is caused by mental health issues. I wish we could have a place to help outside of the main city center areas.

Name not shown inside Auburn August 4, 2015, 8:53 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
No Response

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I think homelessness is related to mental health. Not always of course. We see many more homeless people because families can no longer have their loved one committed for treatment. There is also a breakdown in family life. Every soul is precious. The other problem is joblessness. The government needs to get out of the way of free enterprise so people can find jobs and work their way into a home for themselves and their children. Government interference in setting pay, regulation, and tax burden have contributed to homelessness. These are big issues Auburn cannot solve alone. However, our city representatives can lobby for legislation at the state level to help solve these problems. Throwing more money at the problem is a band-aide approach.

Name not shown inside Auburn August 4, 2015, 7:27 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
We returned to Auburn after a 5-year absence and it is certainly "More Than We Imagined". Actually, much worse than we imagined. South Auburn (where we live) is a cesspool. You need to start taking this *seriously*. Already you are

behind the game in dealing with the homeless/drug issue. My family can't use the beautiful library and Les Grove Park that our taxes have paid for because we pass a gauntlet of 6 or 12 individuals loitering there, leering at us, *often* buying drugs in plain sight. My family has driven down Auburn Way and seen drug deals out in the open, right at the bus stop. I was sitting at the South Auburn Starbucks and two strung-out (druggie) girls - prostitutes- walked in with their pimps. They were there just to charge their cell phones. Every time we get in the car - yes EVERY time - we pass at least one or more persons camped out in the lawn at Game Farm park or the Auburn Way overpass or somewhere in between. The bathrooms at *every* store in South Auburn are trashed. Feces and drug paraphernalia in abundance. We tried to walk from Rite Aid to the Goodwill right next door but couldn't because 2 drugged individuals were passed out in the open in the breezeway. The Walgreens staff tell me the police visit their store every day due to theft or other problems. I'm sick of it. Truly disgusted that you have let (LET!) this happen.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Unfortunately, you were not proactive enough. You are playing catch-up to turn around this slum end of South Auburn. Consider adopting a "walk on" policy. NO loitering. Period. More police with actual power to get folks to "walk on". Stop groups from feeding the homeless. I know they need help, but we are not equipped for it. There is no shelter or rehabilitative facilities here, so when you feed them and give them free bicycles and clothes, it creates the same kind of problem as feeding ducks in the park. They stay and get their stink everywhere. The homeless problem *absolutely* breeds other bad side effects. Please stop sitting idle on this issue. Obviously, such a strong vocal response to this forum indicates that many of us are sick and tired of seeing it, and worried for our families, safety, and city.

Name not shown inside Auburn July 24, 2015, 12:41 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Besides volunteering at the South Sound Dream Center several years ago, working at South King County Youth Shelter (SKYS) and participating in One Night Count, most of my exposure has been at the library, Les Gove Park and seeing so much more foot/bike traffic along R. Street SE and Game farm and Game Farm
Wilderness. It is disconcerting to feel my kids may not be in a safe environment (have to hear rude/crass language, be exposed to cigarette/marijuana smoke, or possibly much worse) when visiting the library or the local parks. My wife feels apprehensive going for runs in the parks. It is frustrating when someone is sleeping in a city park, and when piles of refuse are left around.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I. Develop a comprehensive plan to address this issue. The plan should include:
A. Supporting existing NGOs (ministries/non-profits) that are inline with the comprehensive plan.
B. Provide all necessary services through existing NGOs in the area or bringing in others that have been successful elsewhere. Those services must include:
1. Food (eg. auburn food bank, SSDC, churches)
2. Overnight shelters for men, women and children, with very low standards. Must including sanitation.
3. Housing with standards/ expectations/requirements (eg. churches, AYR). (Work with, but do NOT accept funding from sources that require participation in "Family Housing Connection" or "Youth Housing Connection". They are giant bureaucratic morass that would handcuff our ability to efficiently and effectively deal with our city's homeless population.)
4. Case Management services
5. Dependency services
6. Employment services
7. Mental Health services
8. Healthcare services (eg. Christ Community Free Clinic)
9. Liaisons for homeless and the rest of the community including the police
10. Gracious, kind, but strict enforcement of laws including: trespassing, loitering, living on public/private land not intended for the purpose.

Name not shown inside Auburn July 18, 2015, 11:12 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
None other than watching this town decline as the homeless population grows.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I do not agree with those that want more shelters and food handouts. This just encourages more homeless people to stay in the area. Close down the free food handouts on Auburn Way South, the language and problems that happen there has become out of control. I believe it is one of the main reasons the homeless population has grown so large.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 13, 2015, 1:53 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Recently there was a murder near the SHAG housing in a homeless gathering in the wetlands. Every evening at approximately 12:30ish I hear the carts being pushed by my apartment as the homeless head out to their late night activities.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Why doesn't Auburn have a shelter for our homeless? The Children's Home on N Auburn Way has been vacant for some time. It's location is good as it is next to Sound Mental Health for assisting if needed. How many empty buildings are downtown? Could they not be used for shelters for the women and children? As the homeless are of all ages and sexes, could there be a place to help the teens who are homeless get the support they need to be productive adults? I have learned that many of the homeless just need a helping hand to get back to being productive. They did not grow up wanting to be homeless. Yet without an address to call home, they can't get a job, may need education and just need a break to get back on their feet. We need to acknowledge that we do have a homeless problem and brainstorm on solutions, then act on a step to help those who truly want to help themselves.

Julie Grey inside Auburn June 7, 2015, 1:28 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Since our property borders on the White River & we are two houses from the back entrance to Game Farm Park, we have had many homeless trying to camp or set up housing on the river bank. Unfortunately, there are no restroom facilities so they use the woods, no washing facilities so they use the river (which is a salmon run), nor are there any cooking or disposal facilities. Besides seeing them walking around the park occasionally, they haven't really bothered us. The homeless in the downtown Auburn area seem to be more apt to ask for help though they have not been aggressive about it; some of the low income, subsidized apartment dwellers nearby seem to be louder, ruder. more apt to be seen selling & using drugs or offering prostitution, & overall less considerate than the homeless in this area.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
There will continue to be homeless individuals as well as families as long as our country's economics are so one-sided. Getting a policy in place in order to assist them seems to be the more responsible (& Christian) thing to do.
There are many areas in Auburn that could be set up with temporary housing until these folks could be placed in permanent residences or relocated. I would recommend that a committee be put in place that would properly oversee the establishment & development of such a site (or sites) - perhaps with organizations that have done this successfully, such as SHARE in Seattle, http://www.sharewheel.org/ or others which have successfully created & are managing the 'wheel' instead of Auburn reinventing it; something can be developed that will work both for the Auburn home residents & the Auburn homeless residents.
No matter what, resources for medical, mental & addiction services need to be made available as well as resources for those homeless with children, our veterans, and those needing job assistance. Homelessness is just the result of a broken system/society. How they ended up there is the issue that needs to be addressed on an individual basis, but they all need shelter as a first step.

Mark Siegfried inside Auburn June 6, 2015, 9:38 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I encounter many homeless individuals as I am on my numerous diabetic-health walks. It is not uncommon for some of these individuals to ask me for money for coffee, food, etc. I usually decline to offer money because I know that the money will not be used for food. I also have an uneasy feeling on my late-night walks between my niece's house and my residence...I have encountered homeless people sleeping on the sidewalks on my route. I presume that they are non-violent and non-aggressive, but I can't be 100% certain in all cases.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
The City of Auburn should not encourage the programs that reward homelessness and "locating" in Auburn by these individuals. While it is entirely possible that some of these people truly are having a string of bad luck and truly do appreciate help to get back on track with their lives, I contend that many of the homeless are homeless by choice (chemical addiction, etc.). These individuals are a threat to the well-being of a stable society and especially the children. More than that, it is undignified for these individuals to be sleeping on the street rather than in a government-provided shelter (surrounded by security fencing and in an isolated, non- populated area) where the "residents" would be required to be responsible and contribute positive energy towards their housing, with the ultimate goal of becoming a productive member of society again.

Finally, PLEASE DO NOT convert Auburn to a homeless rescue center; to do so would be to drive out most (if not all) of the tax-paying, law-abiding, voting, non-drug-using residents currently living here, at which point the newly revitalized downtown Auburn will cease to attract the desired clientele as the surrounding residential neighborhoods devolve into a ghetto.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 5, 2015, 12:17 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I work with Teen Feed at Auburn Youth Resources Arcadia House, serving young folks ages 13-25 who are homeless or unstably housed. We see many young people local to Auburn (grew up here, or their last stable housing was here) who are struggling to find stable housing, even young folks who are working. Last week, I talked to a young person who was working full time and living out of his car, and needed a place to eat, shower, and clean his clothes. Arcadia was able to provide that!

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Support Arcadia House drop in programs and other essential resources! Train Auburn police to respond effectively to homelessness, and make sure they know where to refer people. Homeless young folks here are AUBURN young folks, and we need to support them as such. Make sure public services (such as libraries, YMCAs, community centers, etc.) know about and are trained up on homelessness, and also know where to refer people. Homelessness impacts every aspect of the city community, and it takes everyone to respond effectively.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 5, 2015, 8:33 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I regularly interact with the homeless population in the Les Gove park area and throughout South King County for my job as a service provider.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Homelessness doesn't happen in a vacuum. I think most people would be surprised to learn each person's story. South King County is the more poorly funded section of the county given its high population of people experiencing homelessness. Youth homelessness in particular is on a huge rise.
Many people believe that people experiencing homelessness are gravitating toward Auburn because of the services being offered here and they want to stop services because they think it will help the problem - this is so flawed.

Shuffling people around like cattle because no city wants to deal with it is not only inhumane, it's inefficient; that kind of instability only helps to INCREASE chronic homelessness.

We need more shelters (or more funding for the shelters & drop-ins that do exist) to meet basic needs, especially for under 18. Having somewhere to be at night, food to eat, access to clothes and hygiene - all of these are imperative to being able to work on bigger goals. This is basic psychology here - asking a person who's so preoccupied with finding their next meal and not getting robbed/jumped/raped to "just get a job" is a luxury that someone who's never had that experience can afford to say.

More transitional living programs and rental assistance programs through King County's coordinated entry Youth Housing Connection or Family Housing Connection would help ensure more placement for youth and families. Host Homes is also an untapped resource that many other cities have been experimenting with. This would greatly help the burden of shelters and divert people away from homelessness quickly.

And then, obviously, all the social tools to KEEP people housed. Access to education, job training programs, physical and mental health, chemical dependency and trauma recovery. All of THESE are all dependent on a cultural seachange, one that I think Auburn is experiencing currently.

I believe educating the people of Auburn to the statistical reality of causes and frequency of homelessness as well as dispelling common myths would be enlightening. Educating the people of Auburn of the services that ARE available already so they do feel connected as a community and empowered to offer more sustainable change than a couple quarters.

The bottom line to me is that there is no us and them. There is us. There is our community. And a part of our community is really struggling right now. I'd like us to start responding appropriately.

megan gibbard outside Auburn June 5, 2015, 8:29 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I was a staff with Teen Feed for many years, a meal program for homeless and unstably housed young people in the University District of Seattle that now hosts meals in Auburn. I have met youth in Auburn experiencing homelessness and know them to be just like any other kid ... but without their basic needs met. Without stability or a safe place to sleep each night.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
My input is simple - work with "known" community leaders like Auburn Youth Resources as well as untapped community leaders who would emerge if given the chance [elected officials! schools! faith communities! businesses!] to offer more safe housing and family support resources for young people in Auburn. Youth on the streets may be able to return home if supported, and if not should be able to stay in their community in safe housing while they get on their feet.

Auburn is a beautiful community, and we can support all kids who live here.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 4, 2015, 7:41 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I personally work with homeless youth that range from the age of 12-25. We have adults and even younger children stop by our safe place everyday as well, but we are limited to resources and for safety reasons.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
More shelters in Auburn or South King County would be helpful. Or more funding for the Auburn Youth Resources Arcadia would do justice. We would be able to feed more, hold more kids inside, have more kids stay at shelter, have more case managers. Our under 18 shelter lost funding and now anyone underage have to leave there home town and travel up north where they are very unfamiliar with. To give them a place to stay in touch with friends and normality would be wonderful. Have some services and shelter for the older adults and case managers to hear there stories.

Most posts on here are people being afraid, or thinking people are only asking for money, but have anyone really engaged in any type of conversation with these people, or ask them their story. They are humans as well trying to live another day.

Kirya Davis outside Auburn June 4, 2015, 4:44 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I know some people/friends that are homeless. I have never been homeless though.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Instead of boarding up abandoned houses. Clean them up and let the homeless use those as a place to stay at night times. Also, open up some more shelters. More around town so it is easier for people to get to.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 4, 2015, 10:18 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Both my wife and I have grown up in Auburn and both are Auburn graduates. Over the years we have what seems to be a substantial growth in the homeless population in Auburn. We no longer go to Les Grove park with our daughter due to the large gatherings of homeless people present because of the language, smoking and straight up drug deals that seem to all be in the open. The same experience we have had at the Auburn Safeway so we will no longer shop at that store as well.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Break up the large gatherings in public places like parks and stores. Assist them with food, clothing and shelter if need be but there has to be a plan in place to move forward with rehabilitation or hospitalization.

David J inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 10:32 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
As a local Auburn business owner and !!!!FORMER!!!! Auburn resident, I stress FORMER because I could not stand living in Auburn for another moment given the situation of both homeless individuals as well as gang- related persons and just simply violent individuals. My issues which caused me to leave Auburn range from an inability to visit an ATM without being harassed by homeless people, not being able to go to Safeway without being bothered and harassed by the homeless there as well. This problem with "unwanted individuals" in my town has become so bad that after 10:00PM I wouldn't leave my house, if going to down town Auburn, without carrying a FIREARM for protection. With my business, the frequent stopping by of homeless people asking to use my bathroom. Homeless people bathing in the gutter downspouts of our building while my dwindling customers attempt to come into my shop. My business has

suffered because my clientele doesn't want to shop somewhere where they don't feel safe, or where they can't enter a shop without breathing the smoke of homeless people violating washington state's 25 foot rule. I had lived in Auburn for all 32 years of my life, before me my parents and grandparents too lived and worked and enjoyed Auburn. It was sad to leave this town, but now that I am gone, living in a much much nicer place, where we can walk outside without feeling the need to carry guns, I can honestly say that I am enjoying life after LEAVING Auburn. My next step is to pack up my business and take my shop to a city where I can be successful, to a city which respects business owners and contributing citizens more than the bums and homeless scumbags who are destroying this town.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Adopt a CITY WIDE SMOKING IN PUBLIC BAN. Incorporate "pant sagging" and "showing your underwear" into public indecency codes. Ban "charitable feeding" of homeless people, and LIMIT SECTION 8 HOUSING to a minimum!!! people who do not contribute in a positive way to the city should have no consideration what so ever because they are driving out good citizens like my self and my wife as well as businesses. No one wants to operate a business in a town that has very limited good clientele.

Jeremy Harstad inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 10:06 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I purchased my home in the Les Gove area about 11 years ago now. In that time I have seen a massive influx of homeless people to my area! Trying to raise a family surrounded by homeless people is a terrible thing and it is not working for us! Downtown Auburn can either have a homeless rescue area or a residential area for families but NOT both in one!

The people who do not live directly in the area of the homeless congregations have no clue what it is really like! The location of my home seems to be on a main thoroughfare from various downtown bus stops and the Park and Library. It is a steady flow all day and all night. My young son, while playing just outside my house, recently had a group of homeless ask him to go inside and get them a knife from my kitchen and bring it back to them. When he said no, they acted in a VERY threatening manner towards him yelling profanities at him and it terrified him! A memory that will scar him for life. I also have MANY MANY things get stolen from around the outside of my house all the time! Most recently they stole my new yard cart that cost me over $150.

I hear them making lots of noise on drug trips outside my house yelling non-sense and banging on things all the time which wakes me up at night and makes it very hard to get back to sleep not knowing if they are out steeling my things again. They hang around in the dark places in our ally and I occasionally look out the window after hearing a noise to see the flicker of multiple lighters while they are doing drugs. I also found a pile of needles behind my house a short time ago. I have even had them ring my doorbell at midnight to beg for money! Does this sound at all like a place that you would want to raise a child?? Not me! I feel like it is a loosing battle for the Les Gove area residents and I want to move away as soon as possible! As do the other remaining non-drug using, tax paying, voting, people that I know in our neighborhood. We have far too many other experiences to list here. This is a transitional area on a downward spiral because of this and it will take a very long time to bring back good residents.

I also am noticing homeless from all the neighboring cities coming here for the free handouts as well. My local observations are that these handouts only enable the problem and nothing more. No surprise there. Obviously these homeless are usually on their very best behavior at the facility that they get handouts from, so volunteers that only see them at those locations would not know how they act the rest of the time. I probably sound heartless to some of these people at this point, but I can guarantee you that I am not! Just fed up with being in the middle of it. We as a family regularly volunteer for the city of Auburn during special events as well as helping homeless. My father worked for DSHS and he and I spent many hours volunteering at homeless shelters and delivering food baskets to needy. I love certain aspects of living here but this homeless problem will for sure drive me away soon.

Another VERY unfortunate fact is that we have a beautiful library that is unsafe for my son to use by himself and I despise going to as well, for the same reason. Why should I as a voting tax payer want to pay for that? I love the library,

but NOT the one nearest to my home. I understand the the homeless need help, however, we need to really think about where to help them and how it will affect that community! Please ask yourselves if you would want this in your back yard as it is for us!

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
So would you personally want to live with this? We can not escape it and it is in our faces here all the time! Please consider the people who actually live in the area affected before the advice of those people with big hearts and great intentions who want you to reach into the pockets of other to pay for this, who then go to their own homes far away from this problem.

I love this forum idea but also please schedule a town meeting for the residents of the each of the communities directly affected by this problem. Mail or Have a neighborhood block watch captain pass out invitations to the meetings to further address this problem.

I believe that the homeless problem is at least a state level problem if not on a national level. My dream would be for well run, nearly self sufficient farms far away from the city where homeless could live while they get off drugs and learn skills to possibly become employable, get mental help, possibly receive medications and learn that we ALL need to be productive in some way if we want to receive things from others.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 6:34 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Same as with the mentally ill/substance abusers/criminals everywhere else. I try and avoid them and not engage a conversation.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
These people hang out where the living is easiest. Word spreads quickly about free food lines, etc. among the so-called "homeless". Enforce loitering and parking laws and hand out fliers showing how easy it is to be "homeless" in Seattle and Portland.

John King inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 5:15 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I actually don't know if they are homeless. But we do get hit up for change a lot at Fred Meyer. (Or an awful lot of cars run out of gas at that particular location.) We also see people with grocery carts full of their earthly belongings in the area, so I assume those individuals are truly homeless.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Homelessness is a difficult issue. You don't solve it by throwing money at the problem because the problem is NOT money. They need someone coming along beside them to help them get out of the vicious cycle. (Or to get the mental care they need in some instances.) Sadly, most of us are too busy to help. As a city, we cannot "fix" the problem. But we can facilitate those who are willing and able to help try and fix the problem. I would recommend encouraging and facilitating local organizations that are willing to help, such as local churches, non-denominational organizations, etc. This may be in the form of providing facilities. It may even be providing room for a tent camp. (I qualify that because a tent camp for the sake of a tent camp does nothing to alleviate the issue; there has to be more than just a spot to put up your tent.)

I would very much like to see Auburn help. But I think it requires a lot of planning and thought to do what truly will help; rather than just putting a bandage on the wound.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 4:56 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Being asked for money in front of Fred Meyer or by Office Depot. Seeing syringes as I exit my vehicle to go into Office depot. Seeing trash left on B St. Seeing homeless with their carts on B St and on 8th St. The ones I see have mental issues like the one aging woman that I have seen for about 20 years in Auburn, or the newer fellow who stands on the curb smiling at everyone passing by, lately with his shirt off, with his stuffed shopping cart behind him.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
No solutions. These people that I see need to want help, for either their mental health or their drug addiction. There are resources available. They need to WANT to change. If not, there is nothing we can do for them. I feel less safe in Auburn. More drug users. More theft. Get the drug users off the street.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 3, 2015, 4:27 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
The homeless in Auburn that I have encountered seem to be different types of people. One that I know personally works but doesn't qualify financially to rent his own apartment. Therefore he is homeless. Others that I have seen seem to have issues like drugs and or mental problems. The library is a good example of where the majority hang out. I work as a caregiver for someone that lives off of Main street and there are problems with some of them sleeping and or going to the bathroom in between the dumpsters they use. This is disgusting. I also have a client that lives in the Shag apartments by Fred Meyers and the homeless like to hang out there in the back parking lot. They have had a murder there and many home invasions and attacks on the elderly that walk to and from Fred Meyers. I certainly don't feel safe in Auburn anymore especially after dark. I also rent a spot at the community garden near Papa Murphys and every summer the food that we grow there is stolen. We the gardeners start working on these spots early in the year to prepare the land for planting and it is not easy work. So to have someone come along and steal what we grow is outrageous. I also called 911 last week about a car prowler on the corner of Division and Main and the operator said that it had been reported but wasn't sure when the police would be able to get there. That is really unacceptable.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I feel that for the ones that want help and work, there should be affordable apartments available. I know that there are some in Auburn but apparently not enough. For the ones that have other issues maybe clean and sober group homes. I also know there are a few of those too but not enough. Its a hard situation for all, but some how the streets need to be cleaned up.

Cheryl Haven inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 1:10 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I live about 1 1/2 blocks from Les Grove park and the library. The foot traffic that I see and encounter on my street (H st SE) is frightening. It seems to have gotten worse in the past year as evidenced by the amount of break ins that have happen on our street. I have witnessed first hand people breaking into or trying to break into my neighbors cars. By the time you call the police and they show up (if they show up) the people are long gone.
I have also noticed that the White River Presbyterian church on 12th St. now has a free mobile clinic coming in on certain days, when this occurs OMG it is like all these homeless people come out of the woodwork, and just mill around the neighborhoods. I wonder if the people from the church lived in our neighborhood how they would like it on these days. I'm all for helping these people but they show no respect to those of us who are working hard for our homes and possessions we do have. I have also encountered homeless people sleeping on my chiropractors office back doorstep when I have arrived for an early morning appt. Now that is Scary!!
I also know that my chiropractor has had numerous occasions with the homeless that do frequent her office after hours destroying & defacing her property. Such as breaking into her outside electrical outlets to use her electricity, and actually drawing pictures on the back sidewalk where they sometime spend the night.
I have also gone to Game Farm park to walk on a Monday afternoon only to find the homeless camping out in the parking lot down by the soccer fields, and lying around by the some amphitheater that is back there by the river. I used to walk every night at the park, but I don't feel safe anymore.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I really don't know what the answer is, seems like the more you try to help them the more that show up. They must have some sort of network to let their fellow homeless know how good Auburn is to them. Maybe if we just stopped helping them they would move on to the next town who feels sorry for them. I know that sounds cruel but at what point does the city just say enough.

Patrick Sadlier inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 12:58 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Comrades, friends and a few tough characters

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Have a place for them

Grant Reynolds inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 11:05 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have worked for a non-profit in Auburn for almost 10 years and lived in Auburn for 20. In my job I see a wide array of the different homeless community members from people on hard times living out of their cars (single parents with children, veterans, seniors and those escaping abusive situations) to drug addicts who choose to be homeless.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I believe that we have the social responsibility to help the first group that I mentioned to help them. Single parents with children, veterans, seniors, people escaping abusive situations SHOULD NOT be sleeping in there car, on park benches or the ground. I believe homelessness a downward spiral that drives people to crime or depression/suicide.

I believe that we can help end this much like Madison, Wisconsin is. With the help of charitable organizations they have built 98sq. ft. homes for around $3,000. I see so many vacant/abandoned lots around Auburn, that can be turned into a site for these homes. We as a community can work together to acquire donations for building supplies, land, and volunteer our time and services to build these homes.

I am not saying that we just give the homeless a free home. I think that there should also be conditions: a home for 1 year to help them get back on their feet, agreeing to random drug testing, having this "neighborhood" be drug and alcohol free, having residents be responsible for the cleanliness of the area. In my experience with some of these community members are so thankful for someone giving them a hand that they will agree to these guidelines.

Part of the issues of homelessness is hunger. This community could have a garden that the residents would be responsible for keeping up. We could also power these small homes with solar energy.

We can end this problem by being the solution. If we help them and they help other people it would be a homelessness ending flood of charity.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 3, 2015, 8:38 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have noticed more and more are coming to Auburn. I usually try and give them what I can but not in money form. But if I have an umbrella I will give it to them. Or I will go thru in get them some food and offer it to them. My co-workers and I are planning on putting some packets together to go and pass out. Little sanitary items, snacks, socks, gloves, hand-sanitizers, etc.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Maybe if we create a place for homeless tent city. Tent cities are more secure and are more helpful for homeless people. Studies show that homeless tent cities help the homeless to be able to succeed to "get back on their feet"

AJ Vaughns inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 6:19 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I and the church I belong to have been serving weekly meals to the homeless and needy for 4 years in addition to working with individuals to find services and comfort. We have had members of the homeless community and formerly homeless in our congregation.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I think Auburn is well-suited to do what few other cities do - a "both/and" approach. It seems like solutions fall into the category of simply providing more charity or providing none at all. I would like to see us offer solutions that provide both compassion and accountability.

First, I believe we have an moral responsibility to make sure that people receive basic needs - food, basic healthcare, mental health services, education/training, emergency shelter, etc. This has nothing to do with what they deserve but simply with the value of human life and the good of our community. I believe these basic services are generally available for those who want them.

Second, and most important in my mind, is the need to have viable and continuous 'next steps' for those who want to change their circumstances. We should be able to continually be able to present opportunities for change and the help that's necessary to those who are willing to do their part. In my opinion, the current resources are too disjointed and there is far too little 'coaching' available. I have seen multiple people who are willing to take steps toward change but the system is too daunting, the hurdles too high, the support too little. If the existing agencies were to have a cohesive partnership and we could somehow provide individualized but comprehensive guidance, I think we would fulfill our responsibility.

Third, as we all know, not everyone is interested in change, being healthy, or respecting the rights of others. In those times, those who are homeless should be subject to the same rules as the rest of us. Homelessness is not an excuse for crime, harassment, etc.

Homelessness, or any other version of poverty, is not going to be eliminated. People will continue to suffer from their own choices and the choices of others. As a community, we cannot simply write them off nor can we do for them what only they can do for themselves. I think there is a strong foundation of compassion and care in Auburn, but a growing frustration as the issues of poverty increasingly make their way into our city. My hope is that we will not simply throw money or services at the problem, which would be almost as bad as ignoring it. My hope is that we can lead the way in our region in showing a more intelligent and balanced approach that goes out of it's way to help those ready for change and caring for all.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 5:51 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have very little face to face experiences with the homeless in Auburn and I work downtown on Main Street so that says something. The interaction I have most frequently is pan handling outside of Safeway and Fred Meyer as these are the places where I purchase groceries. It would be too wide of a blanket to cast to assume that all panhandlers are in fact homeless, but I am guessing this is the type of interactions you are curious about.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I have worked extensively with homeless populations throughout my career in social services and would like to see more resources available to the homeless in Auburn. When I moved to Auburn 2 years ago, I was looking for a local place to volunteer my time working with at-risk populations and was hard pressed to find anything in Auburn. I ended up volunteering my time in Federal Way to assist with folks experiencing homelessness, as well as at an establishment in Auburn that is not related to the issue. Working and living near downtown Auburn makes this issue close to my heart and I would like to see more comprehensive plans addressing this issue instead of Auburn Police Department being inundated with phone calls and resting all responsibility on their shoulders. The issue of homelessness weighs heavily on a community's ability to work together to come up with a multi-faceted, multi-year solution. This is what I wish for my city and fellow community members, those with homes and those without. This brings to light another issue with homelessness: Most people who are technically homeless are not the people one might find sleeping on the street. Many people without homes sleep in cars or couch surf with acquaintances indefinitely. Auburn needs to look at the subsidized resources available as a safety net to prevent this from happening to both individuals and families alike. It is no secret that Auburn has a large low income population and those families are constantly on the brink of becoming homeless.

William Lawrence inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 2:10 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Frankly very little in Auburn beyond being hassled for change, a cigarette, or needing money for gas, etc outside of various stores/restaurants. However, I have seen the homeless situation across the state and nation in my travels. There are definitely complex issues to address a problem, unfortunately has no simple answer.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
There are those that chose this lifestyle...one TV station did a hidden camera outside of a military base and watch as the gentleman collected on average $18 an hour for working the street 2 hours in the morning, 2 hours in the afternoon outside the gate; tax free and much more per hour than the soldiers giving him money...no amount of resources will change their desire to live on the street. The mentally ill--the effort for this population needs to be in facilities and beds for them. Parolees and sex offenders, they need to arrested, identified and if in violation of any condition of their parole sent back into the system. Truly homeless through exceptional circumstances: resources that are already in place through both govt and NGO organizations, and education do exist at great cost to the taxpayer.

Auburn does not need to be a mecca for the homeless by providing a "tent city" and expending additional resources to provide for shelter, food, or hygiene facilities (note Starbucks on M Street has put a key pad lock on their restrooms for customers only). NOTE: there are already five illegal encampments within the Game Farm Park boundaries, trash, waste accomulating, individuals coming through bordering communities looking for opportunities to break into cars, empty homes or occupied homes. Cold, heartless, not understanding....I may be, but I also believe that there are already resources in place, and with a little hard work you do not HAVE to be on the streets!

Judith Bakkensen inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 1:38 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Homeless people share information. If one city treats homeless people with dignity, more people will congregate there. It doesn't work for one city to be humane and bear the regional burden while other cities are brutal to homeless people. I had a retail business in downtown Kent. Homeless people were using the area behind our dumpster for a toilet. We prevailed on the city to put portable toilets in the parks. Homeless people are human beings and need the dignity of proper facilities for their bodily functions. We have the Kent food bank that provides ready-to-eat food for homeless people and venues at churches that provide hot meals and clean clothing. There are some safe places to sleep but not enough. Even though my address is in Auburn, I have no idea what Auburn does to help the homeless. As cities, a state and a country, we need to do more so the solutions are systemic, not just one city.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
The entire state needs a plan that will meet the needs of homeless people. We need to treat homeless people like refugees across our state (our country). They are refugees. Poverty, a lack of community connections and illness have driven them from their homes or made it impossible to find homes. Give them shelter (tents or any other cover), food, medical help, and counseling. Get them into permanent dwellings as soon as possible with needed help and case workers. Utah and other states have programs providing homes for homeless people. It is successful and the housing and subsistence costs less than the critical medical care and/or jails for the homeless. The shame, fear and desperation that keeps families living in cars at rest areas, tents in the woods and under bridges is the same energy that destroys their spirits and hope leading to physical breakdowns, substance abuse, domestic abuse and mental illness. When Americans hear about people driven out of their homes by disasters, we send aid, food and shelter. Homeless people are personal disasters that happen to one person or one family at a time. We can act as a state to instill the best practices from other states to create safe places for our vast refugee population. Will this cause homeless people to come to Washington state? Maybe, refugees will risk everything for their children. The patchwork delivery systems we have for the homeless now is dependent on a small group of people and organizations. The the homeless people, families, vets and mentally ill are fringe dwellers. They need our compassion and help. The future of the children who are homeless today are being marginalized by our lack of effort toward our American refugees.

wendy curtis inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 12:40 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
On average, I see two to three "street people" per day. I drive from Cobble Creek to downtown Auburn. These people are on the street accompanied by their shopping carts and all of their belongings. Typically, I see the same people year after year, but this year, the numbers have grown substantially. Maybe because they were evicted from their encampment on Green River? Recently, a homeless man, who was ill, came into my place of employment asking to rest for a while in our waiting room. We let him stay, with a time limit. He stayed beyond this time, so we called the police. The police knew him

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
If you are going to do a sweep of homeless camps, please have a plan for where these people will go. Ideally, an indoor facility to hang out in the day, shower and sleep at night, as well as meals - would be best. Tough problem for our town!

Name not shown outside Auburn June 2, 2015, 12:39 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Seeing homeless people at intersections holding signs asking for money; our church has a small pantry and provides food to those who come in seeking assistance; we collect food and other items, such as shampoo and soap, for the food bank and our church pantry

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Please remember their dignity. Give them respect and compassion. Many people are now a paycheck away from being homeless. Do not criminalize homelessness, i.e., not allowing them to sit on benches, having them ticketed and fined for doing so. Include homeless people themselves on having input, encourage them to attend and serve in workshops, on panels, discussions.

Provide shelter from intense heat during the summers and from the severe cold and snow during the winters.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 11:21 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Last summer we realized that a large homeless group was living in the woods below us, just across from the popular Green River swimming spot on 104th. This was unsettling because we have several kids preschool- high school who have roamed in these woods for years. Some say not to worry, that the homeless are homeless not dangerous but who can know that for sure? I read all the other feedback and many talk about drug problems and mental illness among the homeless here in Auburn. The police were moving the group out
of our woods but said they had no idea where they were going next. I expect they will come back this summer. I go by the library & Les Gove park 3 times a week and it seems the homeless group keeps growing.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I ask - What does Debbie Christian say would be helpful? What are other cities successfully doing to help their homeless? How can we protect and provide for our homeless without enabling their homelessness? We donate to the food bank and to local charities through our church but that is at a distance. I am willing to work hands on in a soup kitchen. I have lived most of my life right here in Auburn - 5 generations of our family has lived here. Our city has changed so much over the years but it's still a good place to live and I appreciate your efforts to keep it that way.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 11:02 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I used to be a Domestic Violence Advocate and worked with many, many women and children who were homeless in Auburn. I think the typical idea when we hear the term "homeless" is the older male sleeping on a doorstep. Unfortunately, this is not totally accurate. There are many homeless families who are just much less visible. They are staying with friends or family, bouncing from house to house, or sleeping in their car or a hotel while they are waiting to get into a shelter, other housing program, or some sort of affordable housing. Its a tough cycle when someone is unemployed and homeless--which do you search for first? If you don't know where you might be staying, how do you find work? But if you don't have work, how can you afford a place to stay? Many people get caught in this cycle and there are not enough services available to help everyone who needs it.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Affordable housing! There isn't enough affordable housing for folks who are struggling. And by struggling, I mean both people who are working in low-paying jobs and those who are unemployed, disabled, etc. There needs to be affordable housing for people who fall into both categories.

But additionally, there needs to be some sort of help available for people in emergencies. Families who are homeless or about to become homeless gets referred to 211 to get an intake for Family Housing Connection-- where they might get an intake appointment in the next month. Then once they have their intake they might get put on a waiting list--if they qualify. They might be on that list for months. And this is the system that is set up for people who are the most vulnerable and in the most urgent crisis. It is clearly broken.

Denise O"Conner inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 10:33 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have seen more this year than in previous years and in more residential neighborhood. As for interaction, I have just said hello and have not been asked for money.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
It would be nice to have a facility where they could shower, wash their clothes and sleep for the night. There would need to be a staff social worker who could help them connect with the appropriate services, like medical, mental health, job placement, housing. Location, near Valley Cities offices would probably be best. If Kent and Federal Way had a similar programs, that would be ideal.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:50 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Sad to see mentally ill on the street. Do we have temporary housing and mental health providers to assist? Panhandlers that are not really homeless make more money than I do and don't have to pay taxes who are frequently seen at the Highway 18 off ramp.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Provide night shelter and monitor activity to protect persons living without supports.

Lois Tiernan inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:46 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
My heart just aches for the seemingly huge increase in the homeless. Since I visit the Senior Center often, I come in contact with these poor souls so frequently. I sure would like to help in any way I could, but how? I don't want to give them money but wish that maybe the food thrown away at the Center could be shared with the hungry. I have always had a friendly contact with any of the homeless that I have met, but still feel a little scared of their groups gathering at the library.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I have no idea about a solution, or even steps to a solution, but I am so glad that this difficult issue is being addressed. Thanks

Traci Dysart inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:30 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have seen people on street corners (freeway offramps) asking for money, with signs. My husband gives them $1, but I think that contributes to the problem. I would give food, or better yet, a business card with the address of a place where they can go to get food. I could feel good about my actions while still not adding to the problem.

Several years ago, my husband was asked for money by a respectful homeless man but he didn't have any cash. My husband felt so bad about having to say no, that he makes a point of always carrying a dollar so he can give it to anyone who asks for it. He thinks a dollar is enough to buy food but not enough to cause any real harm (drugs, etc.). I disagree.

I grew up in a city that had a rampant homeless problem. Once I was on the south side of town and approached by a man with one leg with a sad story. I gave him money. A few weeks later on the north side of town, I was approached by the same man with a different story. I did not give him money. My city ran an article saying that the average pan handler earned well above minimum wage, more than many hard-working families.

A close relative was a drug user and ended up homeless in a tent city near Redmond. That was rock bottom for him. He went through detox (3 days of shaking) and then got a medication that would help him resist the urge for heroin. The only help the family gave him was for medical expenses. While living in the tent city, he worked his way out of that situation, went back to school, and now has a regular job.

My mother had 6 children and with 4 of them (my sisters), she always bailed them out of every financial difficulty. They never learned to be self-sufficient because Mommy would fix their problems. All 4 have been to prison. Currently, one is homeless and a drug user. Another was homeless but she is now back in prison. My mother called and asked me for money to help pay for a lawyer and I said no.

I love my family. I care deeply about the homeless. But help needs to be given effectively, not in a way that will ultimately hurt people. So often, well-meaning governments and churches end up hurting more than helping. Also, I recognize that people have different needs. Some want to find work and need employment training. Some are mentally ill and can't reasonably work. Those people need care. The solution can't be one-size-fits- all.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
First, I would like to say that after reading the other responses, I feel very proud to live in Auburn. I love the family feel of this city and the way that people care about others and recognize that there are no easy fixes to problems. It will take a coordinated effort and people have offered to help.

One person suggested that more money be spent on educating citizens about the problem. At first I thought that would be sending money sideways, but then I realized that I would like to be told about 1) the city's solution/ plan to solve the problem, and 2) what I should do as a citizen of Auburn. If the city's goal is to provide a shelter, then tell me as a citizen that I should no longer give money to homeless people, but instead, I should hand them a business card telling the homeless person about the city's services. Then send those cards to Auburn citizens and ask them to put them in their glove compartments. Tell people that if they want to help, they should volunteer at xx locations but they should not hand out money, etc. Going to the extreme, you could make it illegal for people to hand out money. I realize that would be a public relations nightmare, but if you could find a way to do it as part of a larger plan, that would cause real change. The homeless need to learn (and they will, they are very good at figuring things out) that asking for money on street corners is counter- productive, a waste of their time. Signs could be posted at freeway offramps telling people not to give (enable?) but that the city provides services at xx locations.

Now, regarding the larger plan, I think Auburn should take steps regardless of whether or not other cities join in. If more homeless come here because we can actually help them in real ways, then we will deal with it. But let's not wait for a larger group to solve the problem because it takes too long and too many compromises are made.

Perhaps there could be one intake place where each person can go to tell a counselor about what they need. They should not have to wait more than two hours, so you will need sufficient staff.

If they are mentally ill, then they get a warm bed, food, a place to shower and lock up their valuables, a card that they can swipe (like an EBT card but perhaps paid for out of Auburn's funds and/or charity donated by Auburn citizens) and it is good for toilet paper, deoderant, food, and even dog food, but not alcohol, cigarettes, etc. Certain stores can offer to take this special card. This will increase their business, and they can make sure that the card holder does not buy items that are prohibited. I think a tent city is a good idea. Anyone loitering in a park can be driven by police and dropped off at the tent city until they get the message.

If they are just temporarily unemployed, they can be given job training, put to work with the parks and recreation department, asked to donate hours at food banks, etc. while they are receiving help. Federal programs (EBT food stamps) can be used, but them perhaps Auburn could give above and beyond that in order to fill the gap (and there is a gap).

I don't know what specifics you will come up with, but I would encourage you to work with churches, food banks, and stores. Appoint a volunteer team and encourage anyone who wants to help to come to the meetings (including social scientists and former homeless people). I would encourage you to take action as a city, not wait for other cities. I would ask you to please, please do not implement anything that would make people more dependent on an ineffective system, even if it makes you unpopular. Look at what other cities have done effectively.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:26 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I work in several properties in Auburn and the homeless population is a constant problem. They hang around our buildings to wait for a door to open to gain entrance and they have even been seen tampering with door locks to gain entry. Once inside the buildings, they break the locks to storage rooms and other closets often to sleep there. They leave behind needles, garbage and also use these rooms as bathrooms. It is a serious health and safety concern for the people who actually live in these buildings. The police are called but often they run off before police get there or they are not even caught as they are coming into the buildings in the late hours of the evening.
As a citizen of Auburn, I am troubled by our growing homeless population. Places I felt comfortable going in the past, I do not now. My family can't even go to the library without panhandlers out front. The parks are pretty much overrun with homeless people and while I feel incredibly sorry for their plight, it is obvious many of them are under the influence of drugs and choosing to live this lifestyle.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
We need better training and/or services for these populations. As taxpayers, we should be allowed to enjoy our city too.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:25 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
None except for seeing them with their belonging around town. I often see the same individuals moving around apparently to find a place to stay for the day or night.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I listened to a radio program regarding the homeless in Auburn. It appears that Auburn has laws established to keep the homeless out of town and nothing established to help these individuals. I don't know the answer but I think after listening to 94.9 NPR program Auburn needs to grow a heart.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:10 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I am a volunteer with some specialized mental health training. I have significant experience working with homeless individuals in other communities/cities; sheltering, feeding, researching and advocating for good-fit resources.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
1.) Look carefully at what neighboring cities are doing, especially those with long term programs in place (i.e. Tacoma, Puyallup). Interview them to find out what is working. You don't have time or resources to waste on trial and error.

2.) Do NOT create ANY policy, city code, or governance that would restrict non-profit organizations ability to respond to the needs of your homeless population. The faith-based community in particular is very motivated to serve the homeless, and is very capable of operating long term programs, so long as they have the express support of their community leaders.

3.) It is my belief and experience that people needs are best met with a secure and cooperative relationship between non-profit and government resources. Have you successfully established a task force yet, with representation from each pertinent group; faith-based, tribal, government (i.e.DSHS), mental health, law enforcement, and EMS? Seek a voice to represent each sector. This is a monumental task of which government officials cannot address alone. Your answer lies in a whole community approach. Godspeed.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:07 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have been panhandled agressively at the old Albertson's on N. Auburn Way. And the situation of loitering near the library is frightening. Most of the people appear to be young and able-bodied.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Coordinate with other area municipalities to assess their strategies. Are they directing their problems to Auburn? What is being done to Attract the homeless ... how can that be eliminated?

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 9:00 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
My interactions with the homeless in Auburn is when I am on my way to work and see them camped out near the Shag housing on B street or under the overpass. I won't take my kids to the library any more as they are allowed to bathe in the bathrooms, seek shelter when it's raining, drinking and rolling cigarettes. My daughter was barraged with foul language from a group of them sitting on the benches in front of the library. Homeless or not, they shouldn't be allowed to do what they do at the library. Such a shame as it is a nice library. I don't shop at the Safeway on Auburn Way any more. I am approached in the parking lot, coming in and out of the store. Standing in line while the customers abuse the government money they receive for food working the system. When I pump gas there, I am often approached for money.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
We need to focus on mental health and be able to commit. Arresting, jailing then putting back on the street is not working. Unfortunately, Auburn can't tackle the problem by itself. No amount of public restrooms and shelters will get rid of the problem until we cure the illness. We can't force people to take meds but we can put them away if they don't. I don't have the answer, just a viewpoint.

Karen Campion outside Auburn June 2, 2015, 7:26 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Absolutely nothing is being done to help them find sustainable employment. When the $15.00 per hour payment is in effect everywhere, inflation will once again, eat away at any increases.

1. Too many homeless individuals are listless. Rather than funneling them through the mental health system (located across the street from the worksource center) like "fast food", spend a little more time inquiring about their interests and natural experiences.
2. Since auburn or for that matter, any city, does not enjoy "pan handling"; provide consistent and accessible "food banks" and "free meal programs".

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
1. Provide competent receptionist and specialists (and yes, I applied for many open positions as a worksource employee specialist, employment security department(such a large and nice building)) at the worksource center.
2. Since Auburn is the only worksource center in the south king county area, the transit system is totally ridiculous. I have to travel south, in order to reach the auburn worksource center that is located north east from my residence.
3. Dark haired people deserve the same type of assistance (monetary), the same type of effort, and the same type of consideration (business startup), as flax color haired people.
4. Stop stealing from paul to pay peter. My accomplishments and property are unique to my situation and and I need them in order to survive in this coarse area.
5. End inflation.
6. End greed.
7. End exclusive clubs.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 2, 2015, 1:03 AM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
My wife and I have young kids. I do not feel safe in our own home and I will not even let them go out to the car in the driveway to retrieve a jacket or homework they forgot without supervision. Our cars get vandelized or broken into on a monthly bases even though we place signs in them that state there are no valuables in the car. We dont feel we can have yard decorations or planters out any longer, because they will be stolen and probably sold for whatever reason. We have had people walking through our back yard at night. My neighbors have had their homes broken into or attempted to multiple times. Last week my next door neighbor called at 11:45 P.M. because someone was trying to get in his side gate. For the person who wrote that they should be provided a corner of game farm park, they allready camp there. Everynight at dusk they walk past our house on their way to the camp up in the woods above the park. I was walking my kids to game farm park and my 6 year old daughter bent over and picked up a used and discarded syringe. Of coarse she didn't know any better, but she does now. What a shame. I rarely am able to get out of my car and go into shop at safeway with out being hit up for money as I go in or come out. I have even had someone come up to me inside of safway and ask for money. just tonight when I went in to pick up a few things I saw a couple of guys looking to possably be "homeless" in the store ducking down in the aisle and reaching something into their coat as I came around the corner. I didn't see anything specifically being taken but what do you think was going on. I went to the library to return a couple books after hours and I had to weave my way through a web of bike back packs and shopping carts to get to the book depository.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I have given it a lot of thought and I dont think anyone realy can come up with the best answer. Someone else on this posting said that many of us are very close to being in the same situation. Very true but, I believe that the people who find themselves on tough times and want to climb out will use the aid and programs already in place and funded, to get themselves back on their feet. Those programs are designed to be temporary help in a transitional period. There are those people with mental disabilities for whom there are programs for also. To me the issue lies with the people who choose to live the homeless lifestyle. For those people you can spend all the money in the world to build shelters, soup kitchens and fund more programs, and they will still remain on the streets because it just gets easier and easier and meanwhile law abiding, tax paying citizens trying to raise a family in a safe environment continue to be victimized by the people who we are trying so hard to help. something just aint right about that. I'm all about helping people who need it. I went back to school to obtain a new career in health care in order to serve people. Im a former mechanic and often help people on the side of the road having car trouble. I've volunteered with kids groups and athletics in Auburn. not trying to toot my own horn but I do care.
Not trying to be cruel, sound harsh or draw any comparisons but if I have a problem with bears in my front yard and I keep putting honey on my front porch to try to give them what they need, they'll come back every night and bring their buddies... and I still got a bear problem.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 10:45 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I see the around town pushing carts which likely do not belong to them, leaving trash where they reside for free and it is obvious that most of them suffer from some type of mental problem.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Put the shelters and feeding facilities outside of the town center. Don't be afraid to arrest and/or get mental health attention for those that need it. As in the case of Olympia, it only takes one violent incident to bring this to the surface.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 10:15 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
They have panhandled on off ramps to highway 18. They have asked numerous people,including me for money "to get to the gas station" when there is one right across the parking lot. I see them walking along city streets with all their belongings. I smell urine in out of the way places down town.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I love Auburn and it's generous family feel. I also understand that many chronic homeless people have issues ,such as alcoholism ,mental health problems, poor job skills and drug addiction. Many have also alienated their support systems and families I personally don't feel that this should be what Auburn needs to fix. I think the counties or state should address this uniformly because if one city provides services and the next doesn't, the first city could be inundated. For the most part these people don't want to change but deserve the dignity to use a toilet, bathe, and have medical care. We also are very capable of feeding them. As a parent of a teenager I think it would be great to get the students involved as volunteers. This is what real life, community and helping for the good of others is about. Kids don't pre judge and will take lessons and experiences learned long into their lives. Also , as a health care provider, I would love to volunteer once a month at a free medical clinic. I'm sure if you called out for people with specific backgrounds and abilities we could help many of these people realize they are members of society too. P.S. I don't give money to anyone, you can not be sure what it is being used for.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 9:42 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I live just off Auburn Way South, there is homeless that sleep in the bushes on the other side of my fence. They leave trash, clothing and blankets around my property and hang them over my fence. They urinate & deficate around my property. They knock on my door day & night begging for money. The last time, 3 weeks ago, approximately 11:45 pm when they rang my doorbell I just showed my hand and gun through the window. They left quickly. I have called the police in the past but the 20+ minutes it takes for a response the homeless are gone. I have had $600 vet bill for my dog which the vet said ingested methamphetamine. I can sit in my living room and watch drug deals go down on a daily basis in the Goodwill parking lot. It is out of control here in
South Auburn...

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Something has to be done!! The safety of longtime residents is in danger.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 1, 2015, 9:35 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have done some research on medical problems associated with homeless, I have observed some problems that they have, I have observed some of the problems that they create.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Homeless people are ALL valuable human beings. Most of us (speaking as a non-homeless) are much closer to the same situation then we realize - it may take just a small series of unfortunate incidents and we could also be in their shoes.

An article/report on public media recently exposed how Auburn is one of the municipalities making it tough (through laws and policies) on the homeless. This is not humane - and if (God forbid) we ourselves end up homeless - we could end up enduring the same horrible stressors that we are inflicting on them.

Sure, the homeless cause problems, but we need to understand that what goes around comes around. Making the homeless go to other places or sneak around, etc., even forcing them to break laws and making it even tougher for them to break out of homelessness WILL catch up to us eventually.

I encourage all law makers and those who influence them to do things absolutely as humanly as possible. Don't force them to become invisible - if they are visible then we are more likely to do the right thing and help them out at the right times.

Yes, there are times when the right thing is for them to get institutional help - but there are an infinite number of different situations that these people get into and sometimes the right thing is for individual people to help them out.

Please do everything possible to allow the homeless to help themselves and to enable others to help them.

[Side note: one suggestion would be to find a way to supply the homeless camps with garbage service, perhaps with municipal funds, perhaps with private funds and volunteer help.]

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 8:57 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
We see transients all over the valley area of Auburn. Maybe transient isn't a good word because many of the people we see have been around for years. Our neighborhood is not safe, day or night, because the majority of our homeless are either mentally I'll or have dependency problems. We are asked for money almost
everywhere we go in Auburn. As a matter of fact we feel on guard wherever we go here due to the mental instability of our homeless. We are in the process of moving from Auburn.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
For one we need to address the mental illness and drug/alcohol issues in Auburn. We should feel safe here. Make a tent city away from parks and other places that children and families spend time outside. The old drive- in might not be a bad spot. It might be a good idea to ask some homeless what they think we should do.

Dr. Jim Brass inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 8:51 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
As a citizen in Auburn I am concerned about the trash and human waste left behind. As a pastor I give food, clothes and blankets to about 40 homeless persons a week and strive to do more for the youth that are homeless.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
The poor and homeless we will always have with us. The homeless populations has grown now to the point we need to work with the non-profits and build a shelter. Even then we will have those who will choose to sleep in the parks because the don't want structure. That then becomes a police matter. I am happy to help any way I can. Dr. Brass

Larry Gremillion inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 8:14 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
None

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Government is not a charity. These folks are best helped by nongovernmental organizations. Give them a corner of game farm park to camp in.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 8:09 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
There's frequently camps in the Fenster Wilderness area behind our home. I've seen a marked increase in people heading into the area right before dark (when the gate is locked) and coming out again in the morning. We've had a bicycle stolen. I don't let my kids go to the area unsupervised/alone because of the number of camps and drug use in the area.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I've seen a marked increase in homeless people around Auburn, and the panhandling has become increasingly aggressive. We've been accosted as we got our of our car at Fred Meyer from someone lurking around the cars. Even a single shelter of some kind would be helpful. It's not enough to clear out the camps if they have nowhere else to go. They'll just move to a new area for a week. We need a more permanent solution, like transitional housing of some kind, to get them off the streets for good.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 7:00 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I've served homeless individuals at community dinners, I've bought meals for the homeless, my church has donated blankets and other essentials to the homeless, I teach and have taught students that are homeless and I've seen panhandlers around Auburn.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I feel city officials should focus a more concentrated effort in addressing mental health needs, as well as housing needs for homeless individuals. The Auburn Food Bank does a tremendous job of providing food and resources to our community's neediest residents. We need to provide more availability for facilities for hygiene needs, like the Dream Center and various churches in our community. The number one thing that city officials can - and should - do is to provide community service outreach opportunities to educate our residents about homelessness in order to reduce fear and stigma about homeless individuals.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:48 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I see people on the street carrying their belongings or pushing a cart. I worry about where they go and what they eat. I don't know if adding another blanket or handing out a dollar will make a difference to them. They need a home. A recent article caught my attention about homelessness...here is the website:

http://finance.yahoo.com/news/cheapest-way-end-homelessness-ridiculously-191417117.html
The end result is that it is cheaper to create a home for someone without shelter than providing all the services that contribute to poor health, hunger and vandalism/theft. When the weather is cold, a homeless person may resort to breaking into empty homes. A homeless person who is hungry may shoplift. A homeless person with a serious illness may become a burden to society because of lack of clean water, medications for diabetes or blood pressure, healthy diet, loss of self-respect, etc. After reading the article I mentioned above, I understand so much more about what can happen when you have no support. Churches can only do so much...I think we need a regular place with regular meals where we can provide the needed infrastructure...that will enable the homeless to become citizens of this community.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
It is time for some action on the issue of homelessness. Homeless people need a place to stay, an infrastructure that gives them refuge. Many homeless people are not homeless by choice. Rents are high and jobs are scarce, especially if you have no permanent address, a phone or a clean set of clothes. It is time to give our homeless people a choice...stay on the streets or abide by the rules in a homeless shelter (something like the house in Tacoma that recently opened).

Michelle McLean inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:44 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Provided breakfast for a couple of people outside of a fast food restaurant. See a few individuals outside of the grocery store. I don't provide money, but will provide food.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I would like to see the city play a bigger part in providing services and care for homeless individuals and partnering with other organizations, and working together to provide the care these individuals need.

Name not shown inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:35 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Asking for money, food, seeing them hanging around.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Sadly, it's never going to end. This will continually be a perpetual problem forever. Some people choose this lifestyle. Some end up there. There are 75k homes in auburn. Approx 125 homeless. If people brought them into their homes: no more homeless. People won't do this. They want someone else to fix a problem that can't be fixed. So what can auburn do? Do as best they can do to manage it. Allow homeowners to build 10x10 sheds n their yards and rent them out. Put in a composting toilet. Give people a sense of safety and help them reintegrate if they want to. If not, build a long term uniform shanty town for them to live in their own private domicile. I don't know. What city has solved this in a good way? It's systemic.

Ron Copple inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:32 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have dealt with a number of homeless in our city and elsewhere. The majority will want money which I choose not to provide. I have offered work to some and they have refused.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I believe our community currently does provide services to those that wish to partake of it. I believe we can provide a location where they could bath once a week, could also provide job training to those wishing to improve their life. There are many in our city, including myself who would be happy to assist.

Jamie Schelin inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:22 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Well I donate my time to a Christian faith based support community where we feed the homeless every month via a senior center and also a traveling homeless shelter faith based organization is always looking for local areas or churches to allow for them to come and be hosts to the homeless and help educate them, feed them and show them other alternatives then living on the streets.
I believe Auburn should open up one of these closed building at the end of town so they would have ample abilities to bathe. Sleep and be educated to medical care an needs.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I would help set it up with my support via working towards it.

Laura Geiger inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:20 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
Many times I've been asked for money from homeless youth, or for food by homeless people by grocery stores. I don't give cash but will give groceries.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I would like to see Auburn and the surrounding area provide soup kitchens on a regular basis, but also help with looking for jobs, a place for them to shower for free, a place they can sleep w/their dog, a place for them to lock up their valuables for the night (safely without being stolen) so they can sleep peacefully. In short, I'd like to see the area help homeless people with their social, mental, and emotional issues rather than just chase them out of the local parks.

Name not shown outside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:17 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have only had one, a good friend of mine had a homeless uncle with Schizophrenia.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
Because everyone had rights, it is a sticky problem. Drug and alcohol abuse are part of American culture.

Carol Green inside Auburn June 1, 2015, 6:10 PM

What are your experiences with homeless individuals in Auburn?
I have no experience.

What input would you give City officials to address homelessness in Auburn?
I believe homelessness is a symptom of larger issues. I don't believe there is a single answer but perhaps multiple answers.

Auburn Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Responses from homeless individuals in Auburn

QUESTION: "If there was one thing that would be helpful in changing their situation OR if Cities were to look at providing assistance what would that look like?"

"We need more shelters or even day centers where we can bathe and do laundry."

"A place to pitch a tent and take showers."

"Access to water is critical. I can stay clean and wash my clothes."

"If there was a "tent City" we need access to resources such as counselors, mental health providers and social workers."

"We need more shelters; they have to have rules and they need to be enforced. We need boundaries and people have to hold us accountable."

"If you have a tent City it needs to be run like a "work release" or it will become a hippie commune. Quid pro quo, I'm willing to work hard and earn my keep. You will need security or law enforcement and we should have access to resources."

QUESTION: "What questions or additional thoughts would you like to share?"

"People don't want us here."

"Whether people like it or not, we are a part of this community too."

"We stay here because it is familiar. Addicts don't like to be out of their comfort zones."

"It is scary not knowing where you are going to stay. It's dangerous out here at nights and most times I don't sleep."

"I have been robbed by other citizens (not other homeless residents)."

"There is a sense of community among the homeless population; however, people are keeping more to themselves (since the murders)."

"Life is not good on the streets."

"I would have just celebrated 7 months sober. I look at my life and I am so disappointed in myself."

"Feeds are helpful."

"Many homeless don't want to change. It's what they know and it's easy. You have no responsibility other than what you are going to eat and where you are going to lay your head."

**Responses were collected by Tami Kapule, City of Auburn Code Enforcement Officer, while conducting outreach in the community.*

Auburn Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Responses from residents expressing concern about homelessness in Auburn.

"I don't feel safe."

"No way in hell I would live here."

"Us taxpayers are sick of paying for it (parks and library) when we can't even use it or enjoy it due to the vagrants."

"My 5 year old knows what a transient is."

"The people I see walking the streets aren't the ones paying for it. Why should we spend money to improve their accessibility?" (Referring to the prospect of sidewalk improvements.)

"If this activity was occurring on the steps of City Hall it would not be tolerated; why should we have to put up with it."

"These people are very cruel"

**Responses were collected by City of Auburn Code Enforcement Officer, Tami Kapule, during outreach in the Les Gove neighborhood.*

HOMELESS POPULATION GROUP	DEFINITION	SOUTH KING COUNTY FACILITIES SERVING THIS POPULATION (*If in Auburn)

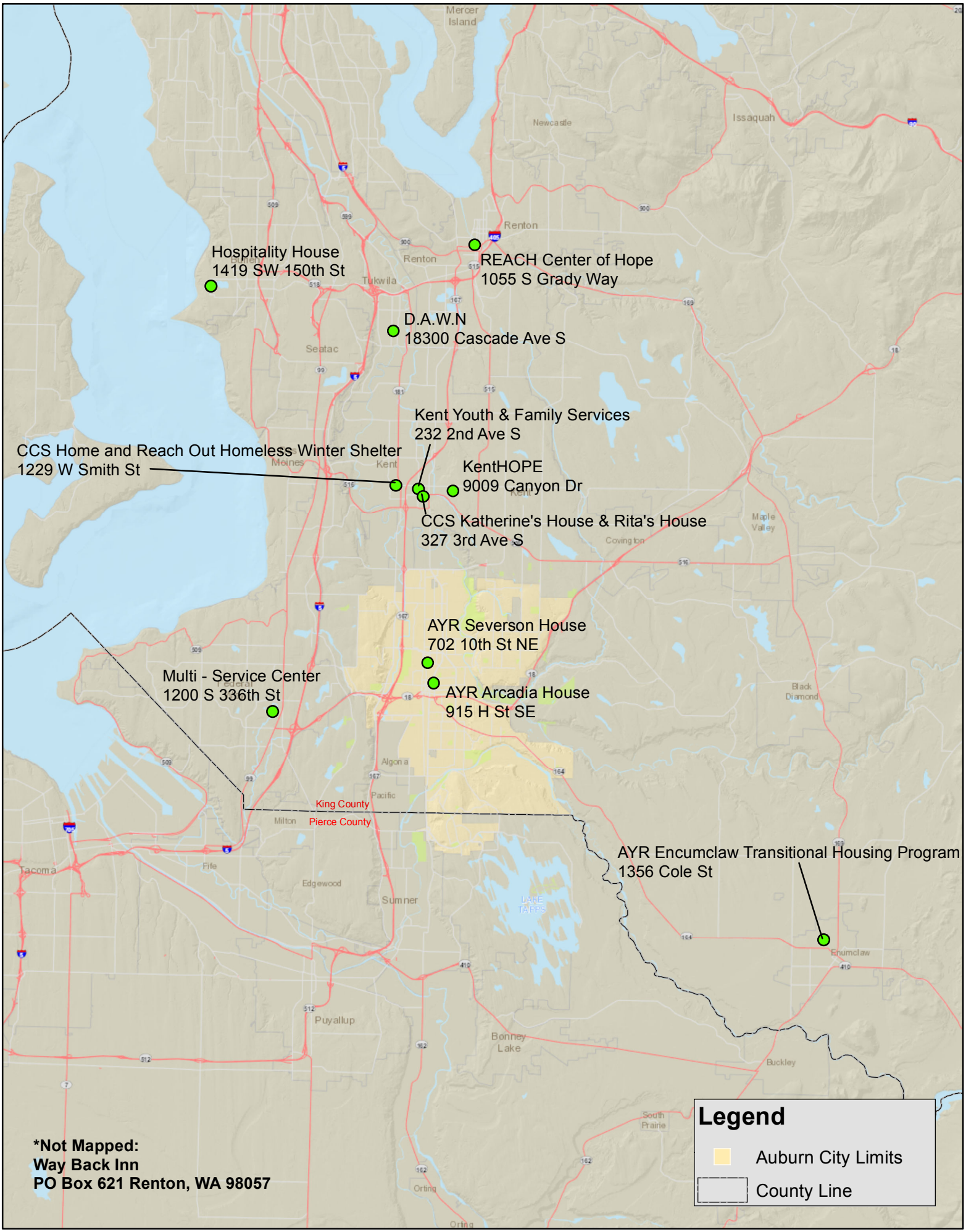
Youth and Young Adults (YYA)	Youths – Under 18 years old
	Young Adults – 18-24
		• Auburn Youth Resources
		  ○ Severson Program* – transitional housing program designed to help homeless young adults and families. (10 beds)
		  ○ Arcadia House* – Daytime drop-in center for youth and young adults. Provides case management, basic needs, recreational activities and meals.
		  ○ Enumclaw Transitional Program – serves youth and adults over the age of 18 and their children providing housing, case management. (5 beds)
		• Kent Youth and Family Services - Provides transitional housing for homeless single young mothers, ages 16-17, who are at least six months pregnant or who have one or two children

Families	Families are defined as households with one adult and at least one child under age 18. Families access homeless housing/services through Family Housing Connection by calling 211.	• Multi-Service Center - Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing program services that include housing for families and individuals. The temporary emergency shelter is for homeless families lasting 30-90 days. Transitional housing is for a maximum of two years, housing families or single adults in recovery from substance abuse • Hospitality House - shelter for single women, ages 18 and older, with stays up to 3 months (9 beds) • Kent Youth and Family Services - Provides transitional housing for homeless single young mothers, ages 16-17, who are at least six months pregnant or who have one or two children • REACH Center of Hope - Provides overnight shelter for single women as well as for families that include an adult with at least one child age 17 or younger. • Way Bank Inn - transitional housing to homeless children and families

Single Adults	Single head of household over 18 years of age	• Catholic Community Services
		  ○ Katherine and Rita's House - transitional housing programs for homeless, adult women in recovery from substance abuse (12 beds)
		  ○ HOME - year-round overnight shelter for single adult men ages 18 and older (rotates between 17 churches)
		  ○ Reach Out Homeless Winter Shelter Programs provides shelter, homeless

		adults in South King County. The program is operated during the winter months (November through March) • KentHOPE - Provides overnight shelter for single women experiencing homelessness (Rotates between local area churches) • REACH Center of Hope - Provides overnight shelter for single women as well as for families that include an adult with at least one child age 17 or younger. • Multi-Service Center - Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing program services that include housing for families and individuals. Transitional housing is for a maximum of two years, housing families or single adults in recovery from substance abuse
Victims of Domestic Violence	Individuals (and their families) who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence.	• DAWN - Emergency Communal Living Shelter and Hotel/Motel Program or DAWN clients and their children

Transitional Housing & Shelter Resources in SKC



NEWS

Auburn struggles with homelessness and aggressive panhandlers

by ROBERT WHALE, Auburn Reporter News Reporter
Nov 5, 2015 at 3:00PM updated Nov 9, 2015 at 10:47AM

Having arrived at work about 5:30 one recent morning, Giovanni di Quattro, owner of the Rainbow Café, found a man asleep at the back door of his restaurant.

Di Quattro woke the man and told him to leave. Cursing, the sleeper got up, stuck his paw in a nearby can and began to scrounge for morning's first cigarette butts.

"You need to leave; this is private property," di Quattro pressed.

As the man was walking away, he snarled: "You know, I think I should just come back and pop you."

Recently, di Quattro continued, another man came in off the street, and for no reason began elbowing patrons. He refused to leave until the police were called in.

"We have a sign up that says, 'restrooms for customers only,' but they are constantly coming in and using the restrooms. Just the other day a guy came in, ran by us, and went into the bathroom. I asked him to leave because he was not a customer. About two hours later, I had to call the plumber because he had flushed his underwear down the toilet," di Quattro said.

Up and down Main Street, business owners have stories to tell.

Of people camped out in the B Street Plaza in blankets made into tents or using a barbecue there.

Here is what ties the accounts together. About a year ago, a new strain of panhandlers began showing up in Auburn. As seen nightly in the Safeway parking lot at 101 Auburn Way S., for example, these new arrivals today amount to about 15 to 20 men in their 20s or 30s. Riding BMX bikes and skateboards, they are aggressive, dogged, and, refusing to take no for an answer, they too often hound people all the way back to their cars.

Given the frequency of car break-ins and the proliferation of discarded needles and drug paraphernalia that began appearing when this set started showing up, the common thinking is to link what's happening there in some way to the use of illicit drugs.

As owner of Creson's Barber Shop at 222 E. Main St., Cheryl Creson has seen plenty through her window.

"Customers who ride the bus tell me that just about every day somebody gets off the bus and says, 'Where's the library?' They know to go to the library at Les Gove Park because they know they are going to get food there. And at night they hang out at Safeway and panhandle outside," Creson said. "They are in our doorways every morning when we come in. There'll be five to six men in their 20s, some in their 30s. There's a few women, but I'd have to say by the appearance of the women, most of them have mental problems."

Creson related another common occurrence.

"A guy comes in a black Chrysler 300, pulls up on this or the other side of Safeway, and these guys all surround the car on the passenger side window, and he's handing them little packets with white powder in them. I don't know what it is. Could be a lot of things," Creson said.

One City official suggested a possible tie between such activity and a recent uptick in gang activity.

Auburn Police Chief Bob Lee said that if what Ms. Creson or others are saying is true, they should call police.

Fairly or not, many lump the recent arrivals in with the homeless populations who are down on their luck or mentally ill, people who drew compassion from all interviewed for this story.

"There are genuinely some people down on their luck," di Quattro said. "One lady I know comes by, the sweetest lady, and she's been homeless for three years that I know of, and I will give her a cup of coffee. She almost won't take it from me, because she's very proud, but she's homeless. She needs a place to stay. She needs the community's help. But then you have those that don't want the help, they just prefer to do what they're doing."

"Every city has a problem with homelessness," said Doug Lien, director of economic development for the City of Auburn.

And of course, that's true. According to the annual homeless count conducted by the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, as of Jan. 23 and 24 of 2015, there were 10,047 homeless people in King County. Auburn accounted for 132 of them, 54 who were found sleeping in cars or trucks, 10 in city parks, 19 in structures of some kind, four under roadways, 31 in bushes and undergrowth, one at a bus stop, 11 walking around, and two whose situations were not identified.

The 2015 count revealed a 21-percent increase in homelessness over 2014.

But to Henry Dehoog owner of the Homeplate Pub at 144 E. Main, that's not the whole story.

"We've had issues with homelessness in the past, and they subsided. What I would suggest is this last year it has re-intensified. As far as the numbers and the types of people we're seeing now that are homeless, they are much more aggressive," Dehoog said. "There are issues with safety. They're lurking around everywhere, and they're just generally a real nuisance. We want to revitalize downtown, but what's happening is that people are afraid to come downtown when they see these characters running around. They're very aggressive asking for money or cigarettes, and if you don't, they get quite nasty about the whole thing."

Like other business owners interviewed for this story, Dehoog is bleeding customers.

"We had people that used to stay a lot later, they don't because the other folks are out late and they just don't want to deal with it. We have such a wide range of people that come here, young, middle aged, and it's the women and the elderly mostly who are leaving early," Dehoog said.

When Mayor Nancy Backus' new task force on homelessness meets for the first time in the last days of November, Ronnie Robertson, owner of Gosanko Chocolates at 116 A St. SE, will be on it.

"The drug stuff, you don't see it going on, but I'll tell you this: we have picked up needles and foil to cook meth. or whatever they're doing out back," Robertson said. "I can't even say for sure that that's the homeless population as much as it is drug addicts. We see people sleeping out there. I'm concerned with people going through my garbage, and it's all over the frigging parking lot when I come in."

Like Dehoog, Robertson drew a sharp distinction between the new arrivals and those whom demographers and statisticians ordinarily class as homeless.

"I'm not sure 'homeless' is the right brush to paint them with. There's people who are homeless who are living out of their cars, and they have kids, and I think we need to try and get them some help. Then there's the mentally ill, and we should help them, too. Finally, there's what I call thugs running around on these BMX bikes and stuff with backpacks doing drugs. That's what people have told me. They almost run people over, and I'm assuming that's the drug problem," Robertson said.

Brocc Snyder, a lay minister from Calvary Presbyterian Church in the city of Enumclaw, last April asked the City Council to consider changing a City ordinance to allow a homeless encampment within City limits.

"I think it's one of the quickest, most efficient, cheapest ways to to provide a safe environment for

people who are not criminals, who are not running from the law but are just down and out," Snyder said. "People who just need somewhere to store their stuff so they can just get on with life. That would be a quickest solution. Of course, what happens when people hear the words 'tent city,' is they really get their idea about what that means from the way things were back in the 90s when those just got started. Then it was just a bunch of people who had problems with drugs and alcohol that were sheltered there. Now they are governed so much differently. Our cities now have so much more control over the residents because the residents monitor each other. There are consequences for doing wrong. I'm looking at the demographic of people who want to get on with their lives, who want to improve their lives."

Perhaps the City in its quest for answers will draw lessons from its recent success dealing with the homeless situation at Les Gove Park.

Di Quattro said he appreciates the difficult task the mayor's task force faces.

Meanwhile, he has this question for City leaders:

"As a business owner, do I need to start arming myself to come to work? Are they going to wait until someone gets hurt, or something happens?"

ROBERT WHALE, Auburn Reporter News Reporter
rwhale@auburn-reporter.com or 253-833-0218, ext. 5052

Find this article at:
http://www.auburn-reporter.com/news/340437461.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Why Governments Declare a Homeless State of Emergency

Three cities, one county and a state have suspended laws that hamper their ability to address homelessness. But why now and what does it mean?

BY: J.B. Wogan | November 10, 2015

"State of emergency" typically brings to mind a natural disaster -- say, a hurricane in the Florida Keys or a tornado in the Great Plains. But in the past few months, public officials in Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; Seattle and King County, Wash.; and Hawaii have used the phrase to describe a different kind of crisis: rising homelessness. "The persistent and growing phenomenon of homelessness -- here and nationwide -- is a human-made crisis just as devastating to thousands as a flood or fire," said King County Executive Dow Constantine at a press conference last Monday.

The decision to declare states of emergency highlights the dual narrative of homelessness today: National point-in-time count data, collected in January, suggest that overall homelessness is trending downward. Indeed, some cities have made dramatic reductions in the number of veterans who are homeless on a repeat or long-term basis. But in certain places, and among certain parts of the homeless population, it's getting worse. "For veterans in particular, Congress has made the resources available, scaled to the size of the problem," said Steve Berg, vice president of policy and programs at the National Alliance to End Homelessness. "For the rest of the homeless population, that just hasn't happened."

The recent history of federal rental vouchers helps illustrate Berg's point. In 2011, amid the sequester, Congress cut $938 million from the Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers program, which provides rental subsidies to low-income households for market-rate apartments. The cuts in federal funding eventually forced state and local housing authorities to eliminate vouchers for roughly 100,000 families, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In the past two years, Congress has only restored funding for about a third of those lost vouchers.

In lieu of federal action, the declarations highlight a new local approach to confronting homelessness. While in a state of emergency, public officials in these five jurisdictions can suspend payments on certain government services in order to devote money to the declared emergency and pull additional staff in to address the problem. The declaration also allows public officials to act faster in connecting people with behavioral health services and placing them in shelters. As a side benefit, the declarations raise public awareness about homelessness.

While all of the places in a state of emergency have legitimate reasons to be concerned about homelessness, the declarations are policy tools, not indicators that homelessness is worst in those places.

So what, specifically, are these five jurisdictions doing with their declarations?

Last month, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales used his declaration to commit an initial $30 million for homeless services and to suspend the city zoning code, which would normally prevent the construction of a temporary shelter near downtown. Later in the month, the city council approved another $67 million for affordable housing projects over the next five years, a decision reached on an accelerated timeline because of the declaration. "Would that have happened if we hadn't declared a state of emergency?" Hales said. "I think we would have studied it for six months."

Hawaii is the only state so far to declare a state of homeless emergency, but it's easy to see why. Hawaii has the highest per capita rate of homelessness of any state in the country, and the second highest rate of unsheltered homeless people of any state in the country. After the recession, its homeless population grew for five straight years. During that time, the number of unsheltered homeless people rose by 35 percent. Of particular concern for Gov. David Ige was an uptick in family homelessness, so he directed $1.3 million for a shelter that would provide beds to families. To remove potential barriers, Ige also suspended 25 statutes, including laws that govern collective bargaining, historic preservation and environmental impact statements.

Beachgoers and tourists walk by a homeless person's tent in Honolulu. (AP/Marco Garcia)

The most recent of these declarations came from Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive

Constantine. In terms of new money pledged to homelessness, it's the least amount of the three cities -- just $5.3 million.* Of that amount, only $900,000 will go to adding 100 emergency shelter beds. "It's extremely difficult to take that as a serious response," said Alison Eisinger, who directs the Coalition on Homelessness, a nonprofit advocacy group in Seattle. "There are 3,000 people on the street tonight."

Eisinger is one of many homeless advocates in Seattle who remain skeptical about whether the declaration will amount to anything more than symbolism. "In the context of a flood or an earthquake, you'd see a massive and visible difference," said Susan Rankin, director of the Homeless Rights Advocacy Project in Seattle. "The Red Cross would be outside. There would be all sorts of evidence of an emergency response."

Seattle and King County's declarations did include a list of urgent requests from the state and federal government, including an expansion of rental vouchers. While Rankin acknowledged that the emergency declaration could add shelter beds, she was disappointed by how little city funding the Murray administration had committed to the initiative. "Acting faster with a very small amount of money is not necessarily going to result in a significant impact," she said. The $5 million "is going to be pulled in a lot of different directions."

Unlike a disaster declaration, a homeless state of emergency does not require approval from the state or federal government. Leaders within a state or locality determine if the crisis has reached a sufficient point of catastrophe to warrant the label. But the start and end of an emergency is subjective, which is probably why such declarations are uncommon.

Because they are rare, it's unclear how long they will last. Hawaii's included a 60-day sunset in December, but the governor's homeless coordinator, Scott Morishige, said it might be extended. Former Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle made a similar emergency declaration on homelessness in 2006 and extended it for two years. The Portland proclamation doesn't articulate an exact expiration, but Hales said he assumed it will be in effect for a year -- the longest it can last without an extension by city council.

What the declarations do, if nothing else, is cast new light on a longstanding problem that deserves greater attention from policymakers and the public, said Stacy Kean, the communications director for Portland's Union Gospel Mission, a nonprofit shelter provider. But Kean isn't sure whether a grand public gesture to recognize and tackle homelessness will have an impact. History suggests otherwise. "Where you can get a little cynical is that we had a 10-year plan to end homelessness," Kean said, referring to a regional strategy that launched in 2004. "And it didn't work."

For more, here are links to each jurisdiction's declaration:

Hawaii

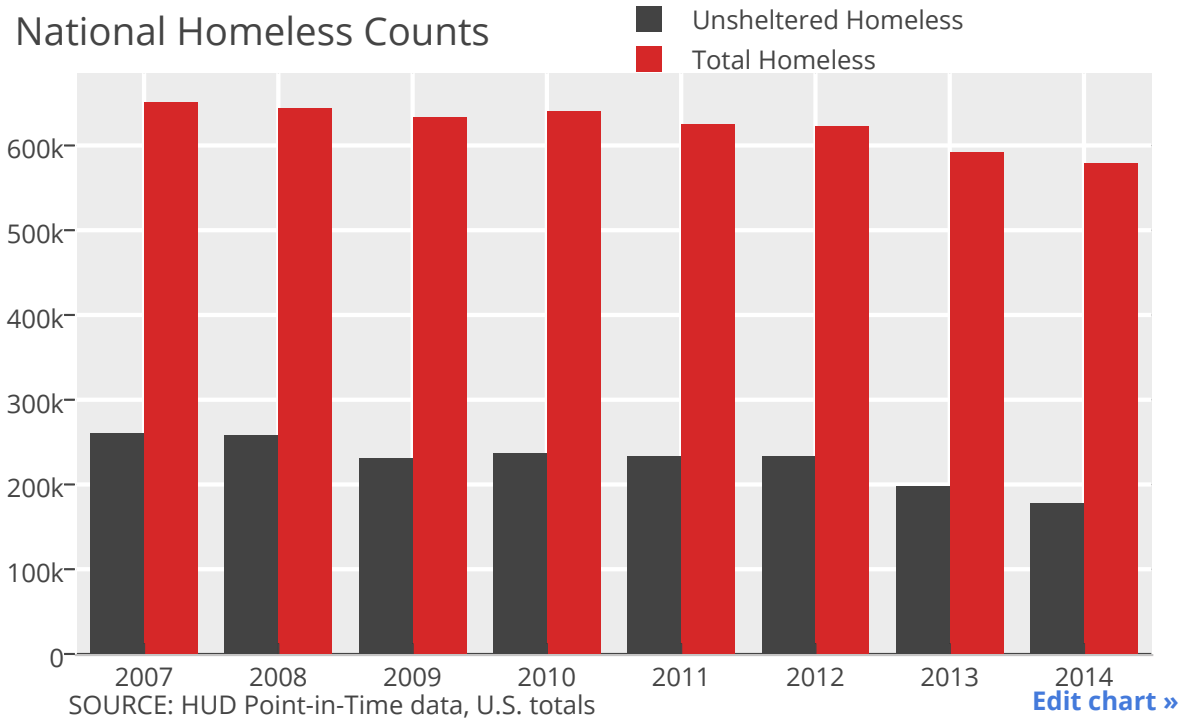
Los Angeles

Portland

Seattle

King County

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development collects point-in-time-count data from communities across the country on an annual or biannual basis. Governing *compiled the counts for total homeless persons and total homeless persons who are unsheltered for the United States and for all four communities that are now in a state of emergency. Like most large metro areas, Seattle and King County report their data as one community, as do Portland and Multnomah County and Los Angeles and Los Angeles County.*



***CORRECTION:** *A previous version of the story incorrectly stated that Seattle had committed less new money than the other three communities in a homeless state of emergency. It has committed less than the other two cities, but more than Hawaii.*

This article was printed from: **http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-when-cities-declare-a-homeless-state-of-emergency.html**