CITY OF AUBURN

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

November 2019

THE CLOUDBURST GROUP

CITY OF AUBURN WASHINGTON

Cover photo by Ron Clausen.

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Executive Summary

Background

This assessment was the culmination of a funded mandate from the City Council of Auburn to provide additional context and analysis to the Committee in their efforts to prioritize funding to those agencies and non-profits working with the highest need communities. Given that community needs consistently out measure available resources, this assessment will assist the Committee in their efforts to do the most with the available funding. The goal of this report is to:

- Identify how City goals could be aligned to meet community needs
- Be a tool in the City's human service funding process
- Provide critical information for grant applications, and
- Support the strategic planning update to the City's 2020-2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Consolidated Plan

The Cloudburst Consulting Group ("Cloudburst") was selected as the consultant to conduct the Community Needs Assessment. The work was completed working closely with City staff, receiving input from the Human Services Committee.

Purpose and Methodology

The primary purpose of this report is to act as a decision-making tool within the human service funding process, aiding council and committee members in their efforts to utilize funds to create the most impact with the funds made available. To create a report that is both functional and robust enough to justify decisions based off the report, a mixed methods research approach was used; leveraging qualitative and quantitative data, supplemented by surveys.

The quantitative data gathering, and subsequent analysis was completed with human service funding in mind, focusing on topics where human service dollars have been implemented in the past or where, through focus groups and interviews, it is thought human service funding may go in the future.

The qualitative data consisted of focus groups and direct interviews; this analysis includes individuals with direct lived experience interacting with human service providers in Auburn. These focus groups and interviews were carefully planned, with the assistance of City staff. Representation was excellent at all focus groups and reflected a diverse cross-section of Auburns population and service organizations.

Both of the analysis sections were supplemented by two surveys; one for residents at-large and one for those City staff personnel whose job function has them interacting directly with residents in need of services.

Phone consultations were done with two cities' human service representatives, Spokane and Walla Walla. Those consultations were to initially inform portions of the recommendations, adding detail and an opportunity for live learning from a jurisdiction that may be implementing some of the recommendations outlined below. Those conversations were fruitful; however, it is the consultant's belief that the jurisdictions vary in degrees that make a direct comparison difficult. Spokane had enough system similarities to outline several concepts for further thought and how they may be integrated into Auburn systems, however due to system differences Walla Walla was not explicitly included in this document. The key takeaways from the consultation with Spokane on their human service funding model and system are outlined at the end of this document.

Finally, the consultants developed a set of recommendations based on findings. Those findings are summarized below and are expounded upon near the end of this document.

Key Findings

The King County housing market has notoriously been outpaced by rapid growth over the last decade and the cost of living has become increasingly unaffordable throughout the region for a wider number of households. Over half of renters and 1/3 of homeowners in Auburn experience a housing problem (cost burden is overwhelmingly the most common housing problem experienced), resulting in thousands of Auburn households paying a high percentage of their income toward housing costs and unable to afford other necessities. This situation forces difficult household spending decisions on a monthly basis and an increased demand on community resources to meet basic needs. The Human Service system is experiencing more demand from residents than ever before and has become increasingly tapped by service providers to fund additional needs.

The upward trend in the cost of living has put a great deal of pressure on Auburn residents, and this trend is expected to continue. To meet this challenge, additional funding to the Human Services budget is imperative, focusing primarily on housing and emergency shelter resources with strong services to support people in addressing housing challenges and connecting to mainstream community resources so they can sustain housing long-term and thrive in the City of Auburn.

Key recommendations include:

- Increase the Human Services budget to meet the growing need; funding Human Service priorities at a minimum of 1% of General Fund Expenditures, adjusting annually to meet increases in population.
- Prioritize 75% of budget allocations to enhance and increase housing, emergency shelter, and supportive service resources that are evidence-based and align with local and national best practices. Ensure resources are flexible and rooted in Progressive Engagement, providing what a person needs at the time they request assistance.
    - Supportive service may include mental health supports and mainstream resource connection support (mental health services, financial benefits, healthcare, etc.)
- Prioritize 25% of budget allocations to meeting basic needs (laundry, showers, storage, safe parking) and job training programs/services
    - ***A detailed budget allocation recommendation is stated in the Budget Allocation Recommendations section of this report***
- Program and system alignment with the Housing First philosophy, ensuring low barriers and quality supportive services so all people have access to basic housing, shelter and service needs
- Implement a system navigation approach that promotes streamlined and trauma-informed access to community resources and housing location services

It is understood that the recommendations near the end of this document are a shift from how human service funding has been prioritized in the past. These recommendations are justified through data analysis, surveys, and conversations with residents and stakeholders, and fall in alignment with Council priorities. Unmet housing needs often translate into other needs subsequently not being met; such as food, clothing, education, childcare, employment, among others. This is further reason to first address the housing issues Auburn residents are

experiencing. As is consistent with the Housing First philosophy, once housing needs are sufficiently met, other needs may be addressed in a manner that is more sustainable, providing the individual and/or family with space and capacity to engage in any other needed or desired services.

There is no metric or easily identifiable signal to know when to readjust priorities for human service funding. Resident needs change over time and it is not expected that the prioritization or recommended funding ratios remain a constant, rather an ongoing detailed and thorough investigation of needs is the best catalyst for addressing emerging or evolving needs. When improvement is made to address unmet immediate housing needs and community needs shift, human service funds should be balanced with more prevention-oriented strategies including education, childcare and early childhood intervention to have a maximum long-term impact. Given Auburn's status as a HUD entitlement grantee receiving a CDBG allocation each year, and requiring Auburn to submit a Consolidated Plan every five (5) years, it is recommended that community needs be thoroughly reviewed and analyzed in a manner similar to this report as the City prepares its next Consolidated Plan in 2024.

Community Quantitative Analysis

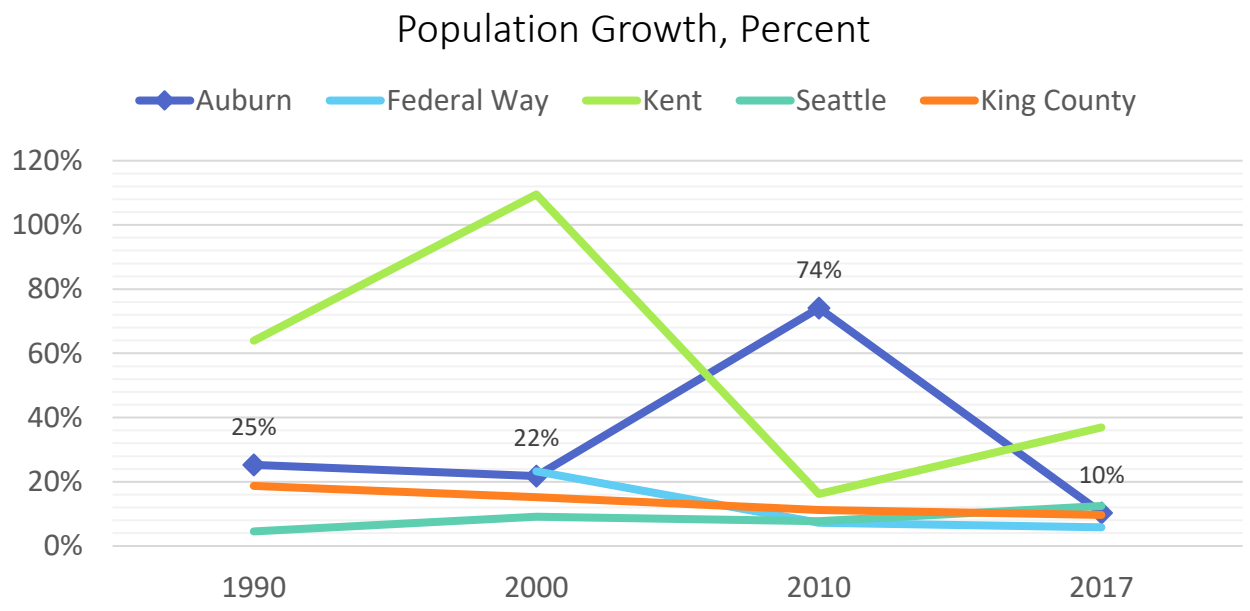
Community Profile

Similar to other cities within King County and the Puget Sound region at-large, Auburn has grown rapidly, becoming an increasingly diverse community as it pertains to race/ethnicity, income, education, and language among other categories. This section will outline the current circumstances in Auburn as well as identify the growth trends that have occurred since 2010. The United States Census Bureau data is utilized throughout this profile to offer consistency among variables between topics.

Population

According to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), the population of Auburn is 77,440, this is a 10.3% increase from 2010. These residents form 18,862 families, making the average family size 3.25, well above the national average of 2.63 and the King County average of 2.45.

Although population growth is felt by the entire region, it is notably large in Auburn. Each year, Auburn has increased its share of residents within King County; meaning that Auburn has outpaced most other King County cities in percentage of growth. Auburn accounted for 1.9% of the King County population in 1970, now accounting for 3.7% of the population. The graph below outlines the percent growth from 1980 to 2017, marking the growth percent between each ten-year census and ending with the percent change from 2017 to 2010. It is important to note that the large jumps in percentage growth reflect annexations of existing populations in the region and not an influx of new residents.



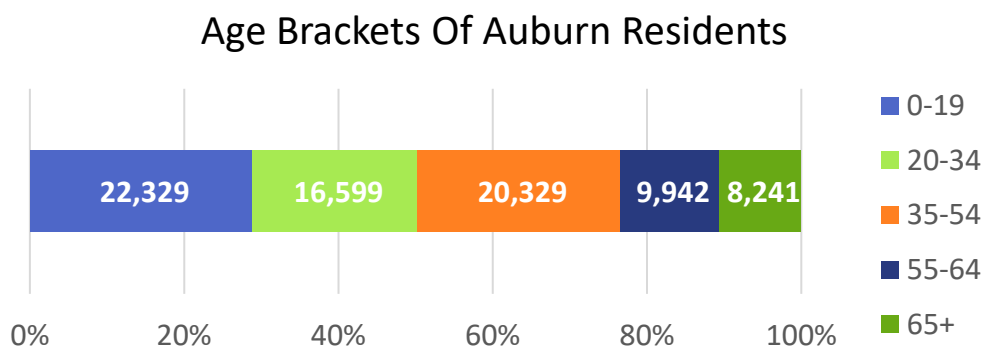
Source: 1990, 2000, 2010 Census & 2017 ACS

The State of Washington[1] forecasts that King County will continue to grow at a rapid pace, estimating a population of 2.44 million people by 2040. The Auburn Comprehensive Plan projects a population of 100,000 by 2035, a number established by King County and Pierce County in their Countywide Planning Policies. A population of 100,000 by 2035 would reflect a 26% increase in residents from 2017.

As Auburn has grown significantly over the past decade, much of the growth has been in the younger age brackets. In 2010 the median age was 35.7 years old, in 2017 the median age was 34.8 years old. While this decrease in median age reflects a trend towards a younger overall population, Auburn is also home to an increasingly large elderly population. The elderly population, according to the State of Washington forecast is expected to continue to grow at an outsized rate. In 2015 those aged 65+ made up about 12% of the King County population. That number is forecasted to increase to 19.5% by 2040.

Elderly households are often more vulnerable due to either fixed or constrained income and increased health risks. Auburn residents over the age of 65 make up 11% of the population while someone over the age of 62 resides in just over one-quarter of all households in Auburn. Notably, those households that contain someone over the age of 62 experience a housing problem (cost burden, overcrowding, or substandard housing) at a rate of 11%. The most common housing problem among the elderly is cost burden (spending more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs). Particularly because elderly households are more likely to be on a fixed income and have fewer opportunities to increase income streams.

Below is a graph that shows the age brackets as of 2017 for Auburn.



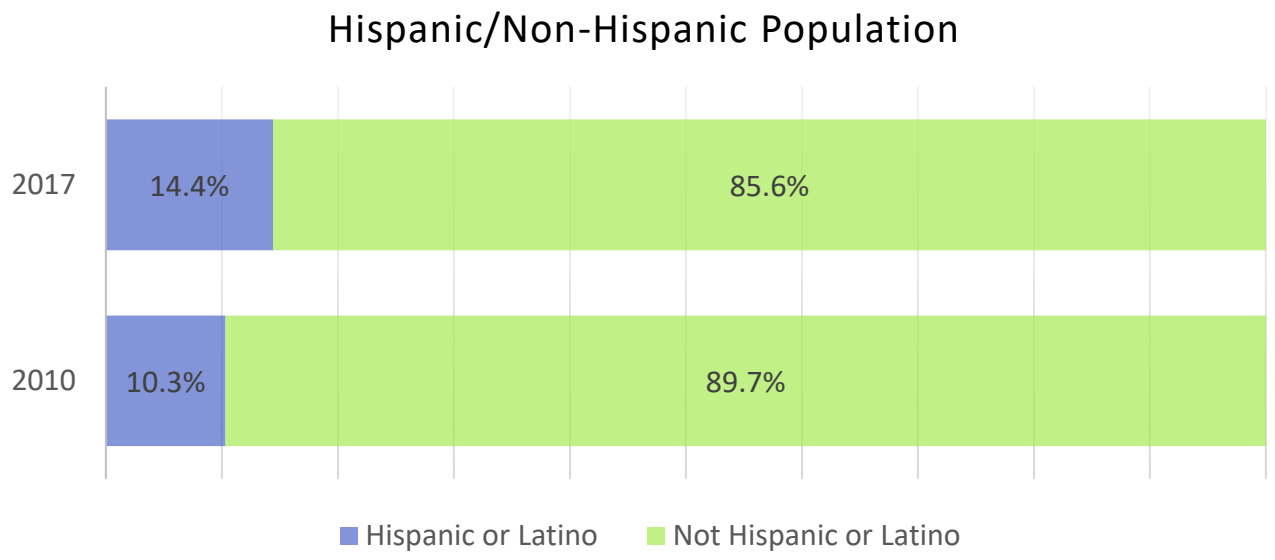
Source:2017 ACS 5-yr estimate[2]

[1] State of Washington Office of Financial Management, https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-forecasts-and-projections/growth-management-act-county-projections/growth-management-act-population-projections-counties-2010-2040-0

[2] The American Community Survey (ACS) data is a Census Bureau dataset developed each year, the 2017 dataset is the most current. In all instances within this report where ACS data is used, it is the 5-year estimate data.

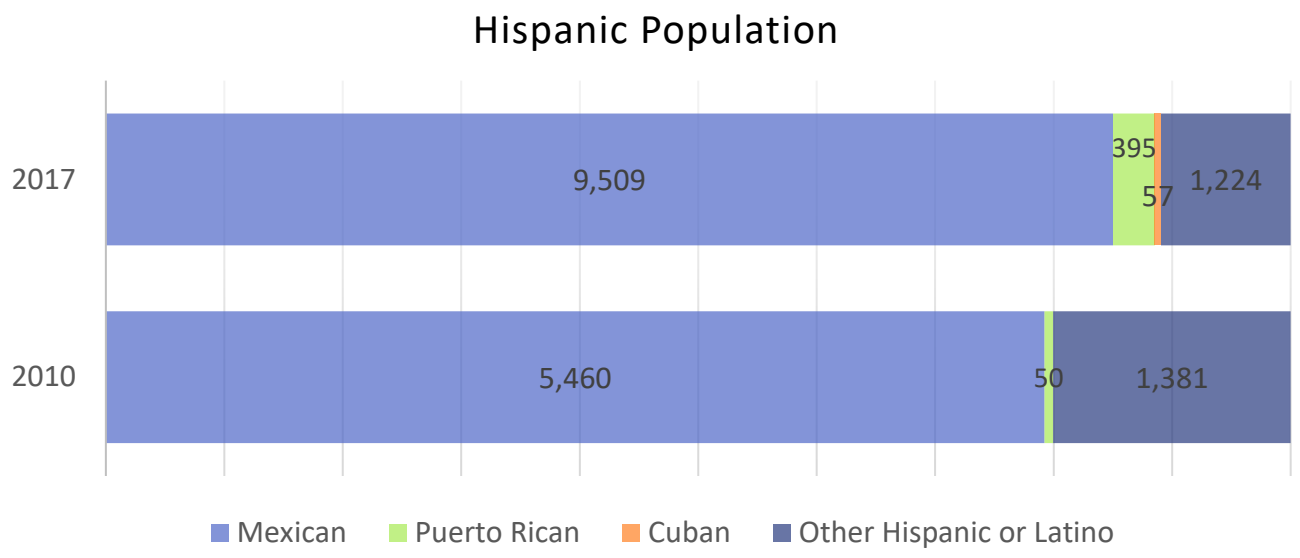
Race/Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic backgrounds in Auburn are reflective of the trends in the region as a whole; steadily shifting towards a more diverse population. This section will first look at changes in the Hispanic and Non-Hispanic populations, and then identify shifts within each of those two categories more specifically. The Hispanic population has increased by 4.1 percentage points since 2010, now making up 14.4% of the Auburn population.



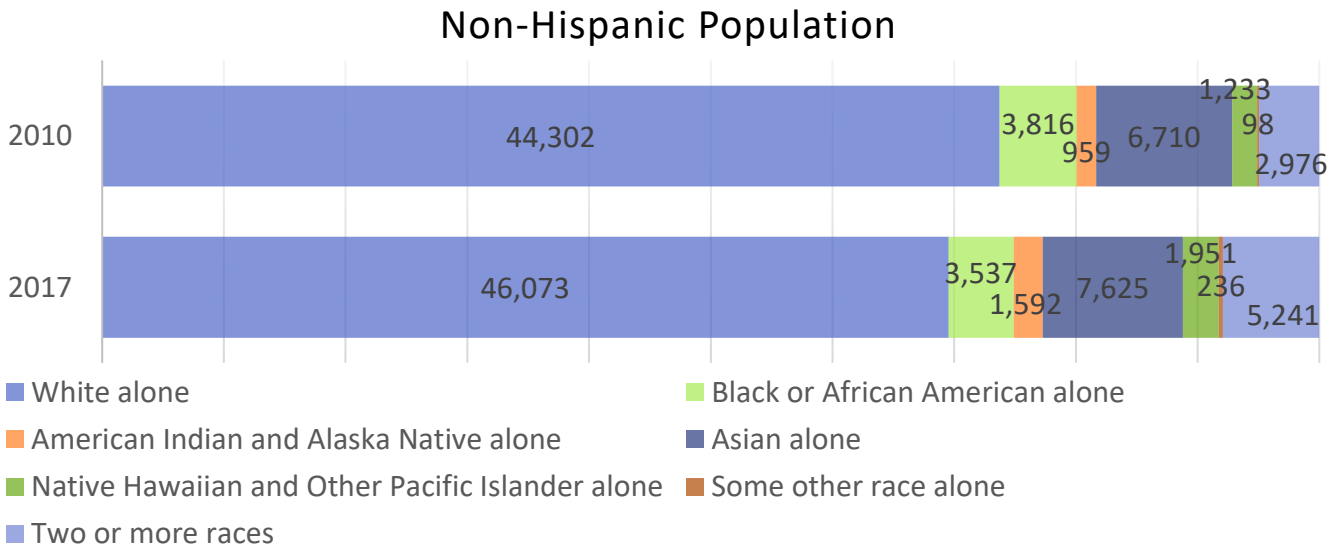
Source: 2010 ACS 5-yr estimate & 2017 ACS 5-yr estimate

This shift is captured by Census data, which is indicative of the adult population. This slight change in demographics is also highlighted by the student population in the Auburn School District. In the 2017-18 school year within the Auburn School District, 29.9% of all students were *Hispanic/Latino of any race* while 38.9% of the student population is *White*. This most likely points to *White* students having more representation in private schools in the area as compared to other races.



Source: 2010 ACS 5-yr estimate & 2017 ACS 5-yr estimate

Within the Hispanic population of Auburn, the largest shift comes from those residents with *Mexican* heritage. Making up 8.2% of the total population in 2010, Mexican residents now make up 12.3% of the population, a four (4) percentage point growth in seven years. This marks the single biggest growth trend from 2010 in any single race/ethnicity category.



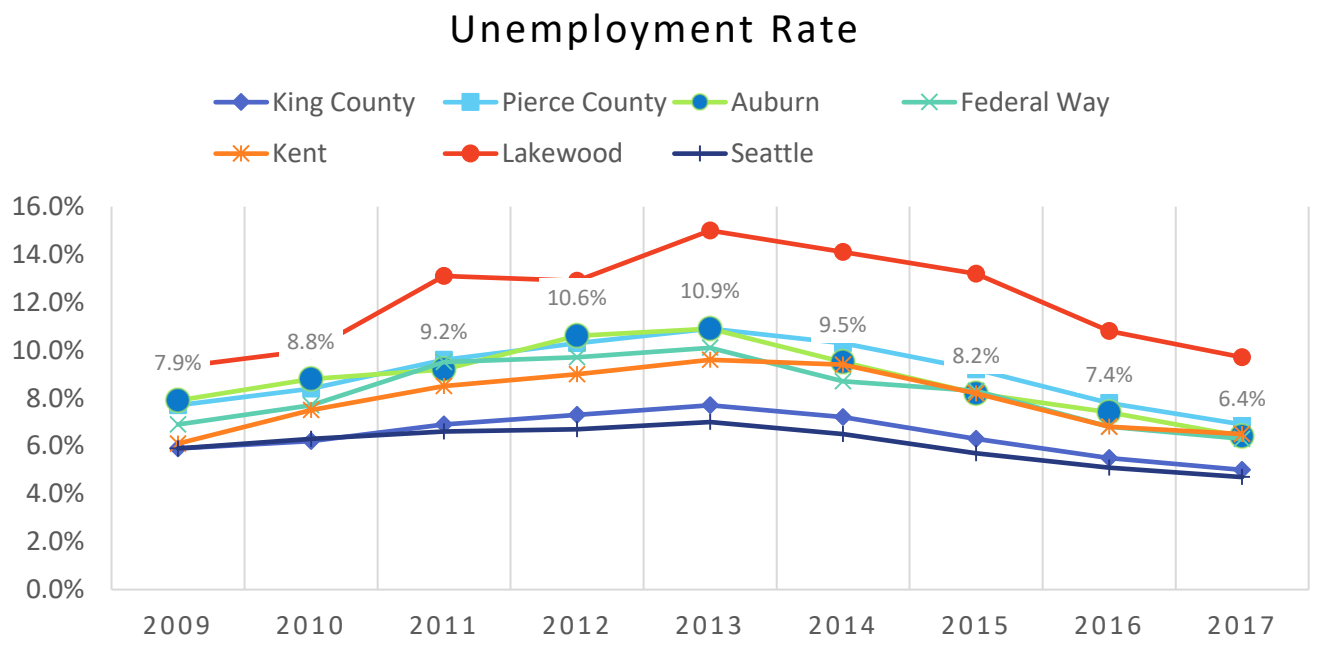
Source: 2010 ACS 5-yr estimate & 2017 ACS 5-yr estimate

Within the non-Hispanic population of Auburn, the largest shift is those residents that are *White* and *Two or more races*. The shift among *White alone* residents was one of two net decreases since 2010, down 6.6 percentage points, the other being *Black or African American alone* with a 1.1 percentage point decrease. The other notable shift in demographics comes within the *Two or more races* category, marking a 2.4 percentage point increase since 2010. Now making up just under 5% of the total population, this growth trend is indicative of an overall trend towards greater diversity in a community as there are an increased number of mixed-race partnerships and families.

Workforce

Auburn, like much of the Puget Sound region has experienced substantial growth on nearly all fronts due to its proximity to some of the highest paying jobs in the country as well as its location that has ready access to highly sought-after recreation and leisure. As is with most urban centers within the country, many suburban cities find their residents commute outside of their home city for work.

The unemployment rate has steadily declined following a peak in the unemployment rate of 10.9% in 2013.



Source: 2009-2017 ACS 5-yr estimate

According to 2015 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamic (LEHD) data, only about 13% of the Auburn population both live and work in Auburn. This is not uncommon in suburban communities, especially those communities so near a large-scale economic hub such as Seattle. Comparing this 13% to neighboring cities, we'll see that it is not uncommon for such a small number of individuals to both work and live in the same city.

Employment status is a good predictor for insurance coverage; according to a Kaiser Family Foundation report, about half (49%) of the country's population received their health insurance through an employer sponsored insurance plan.

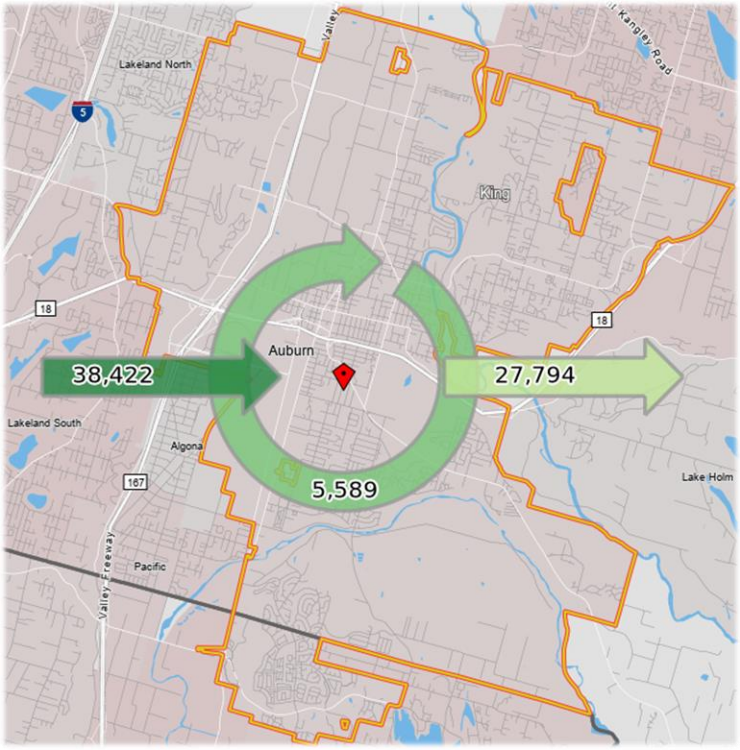
Insured Rates by City

	Total Insured	*Total Uninsured*	*Employed*		*Unemployed*	
			Insured	Uninsured	Insured	Uninsured
Auburn	**90.2%**	**9.8%**	**88.3%**	**11.7%**	**70.7%**	**29.3%**
Federal Way	88.6%	11.4%	84.8%	15.2%	77.2%	22.8%
Kent	89.6%	10.4%	88.0%	12.0%	70.8%	29.2%
King County	93.0%	7.0%	91.8%	8.2%	75.1%	24.9%
Washington	91.7%	8.3%	89.7%	10.3%	70.8%	29.2%

Source: 2017 ACS

Auburn fares well compared to neighboring South King County cities when looking at the percentage of the population that are insured. Just over 90% of Auburn residents insured, while that number drops to about 71% when looking at those insured that are also unemployed. Another important demographic to consider when looking at insured rates are those under the age of nineteen (19); 95% of Auburn residents under the age of 19 are insured.

Employment Inflow/Outflow



Source: United States Census Bureau; OnTheMap

The graphic to the left identifies the number of individuals coming into Auburn to work (38,422), those who both live and work in Auburn (5,589), and those living in Auburn that work elsewhere (27,794). According to the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report [3], there are seven employers in Auburn with more than 1,000 employees:

1. The Boeing Company
2. Muckleshoot Tribal Enterprises
3. The Outlet Collection
4. Auburn School District
5. Multicare Auburn Medical Center
6. Green River College
7. Emerald Downs Racetrack

These seven employers account for 48% of the total city employment. These same employers were also the largest employers in 2009, then accounting for 46.1% of total city employment

Percent employed and living in the same city	
Auburn	12.7%
Federal Way	16.0%
Kent	14.3%
Lakewood	13.9%
Seattle	40.3%

Source: United States Census Bureau; OnTheMap

As mentioned in the *2016 Ten-Year Economic Development Strategic* Plan, Auburn is positioned to harness the successes of its neighbors to develop its own economic future. This access to a bustling economic market has steadily increased household wages while decreasing the unemployment rate. Many of the jobs that are driving the economic growth in the area require a college education. Again, Auburn is positioned well to capitalize on this with its proximity to Green River College and the partnerships already formed to create channels for workforce training and development.

[3] http://weblink.auburnwa.gov/External/ElectronicFile.aspx?dbid=0&openfile=true&docid=355186

Education

While many of the jobs sought after in the region are high-tech jobs, South King County remains a manufacturing hub for the region. Due to this, it is not surprising that South King County cities run slightly under King County as a whole when looking at educational attainment. Auburn runs slightly less than its neighbors when comparing educational attainment.

2017 Educational Attainment Levels (% of total population over 25 years old)

	High School Diploma	*Some College (no degree)*	*Associate's Degree*	*Bachelor's Degree*	*Graduate Degree*
Auburn	**29.7**	**24.6**	**10.2**	**16.7**	**6.6**
Federal Way	25.7	25.8	11.4	18.2	7.9
Kent	26.0	23.3	11.4	17.8	6.9
Lakewood	28.2	27.4	11.7	14.2	7.7
King County	13.5	18.6	8.1	30.7	19.6

Source: 2010 - 2017 ACS

The chart below outlines the changes in educational attainment from 2010 to 2017. Notably, Auburn has seen an increase in those obtaining a high school diploma but no further education and a significant drop in those beginning some post-secondary education while not finishing a degree. Auburn has seen relatively little change in the percentage of residents obtaining post-secondary education since 2010.

Difference in Education Levels from 2010 to 2017

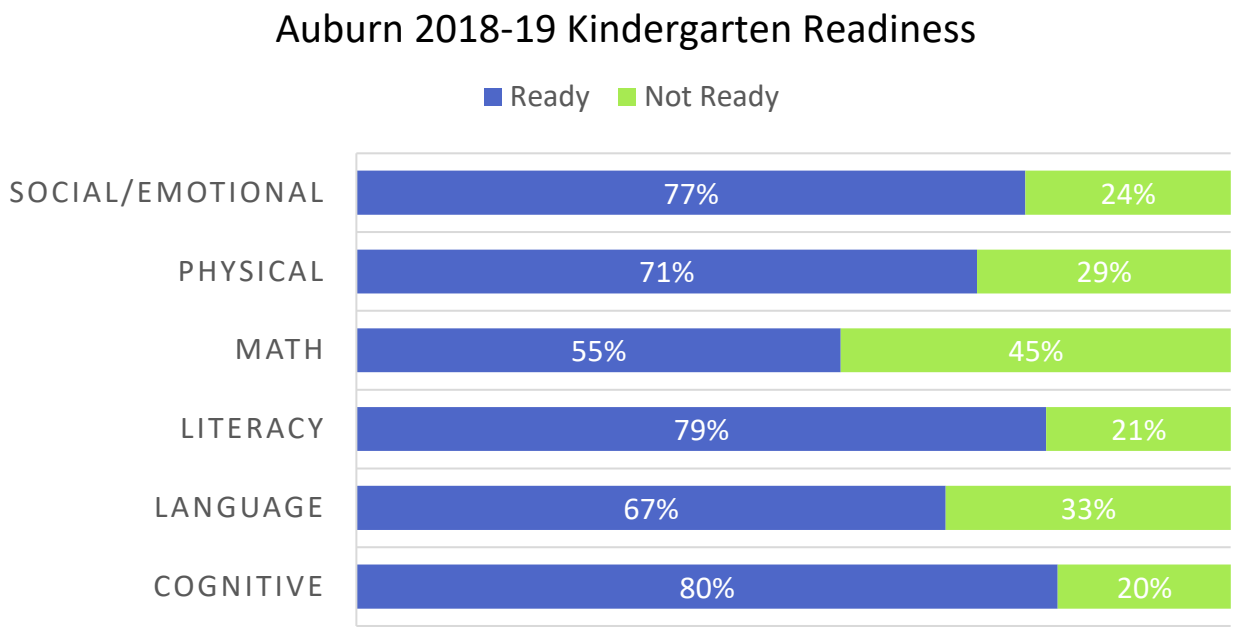
	High School Diploma	*Some College (no degree)*	*Associate's Degree*	*Bachelor's Degree*	*Graduate Degree*
Auburn	**1.1**	**-3.3**	**0**	**0.6**	**-0.6**
Federal Way	0.2	-0.9	1.3	-1.0	1.0
Kent	-0.6	-1.2	2.1	-0.1	0.9
Lakewood	-0.8	0.9	2.2	-0.8	-0.1
King County	-4.2	-2.3	0.1	1.9	3.2

Source: 2010 - 2017 ACS

Although it is important to recognize the current workforce and their levels of education to consider areas where support may be offered to best match workers with jobs, it is also important to look at the school system and identify areas that could use resources to close gaps in achievement. As of the 2018 school year, Auburn Public Schools enroll 17,093 students, with an on-time/four-year graduation rate of 77.4%.

Each year the Auburn School District collects data on kindergarten readiness, assessed by utilizing the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS). This assessment is done during the first two months of kindergarten; teachers observe students across six areas of development: social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math. Understanding this early development is used to better help families prepare their children for success beyond kindergarten. The only requirement for kindergarten students is that they are five years of age by August 31 of the school year.

The chart below outlines kindergarten readiness in six areas for the Auburn School District for the 2018-19 school year. Those kindergarten students identified in the *Not Ready* category are identified to have a range of skills typical of 0-3-year-old children. While there are some four-year-old children that show levels of readiness below the kindergarten level, some show levels above.



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Auburn School District

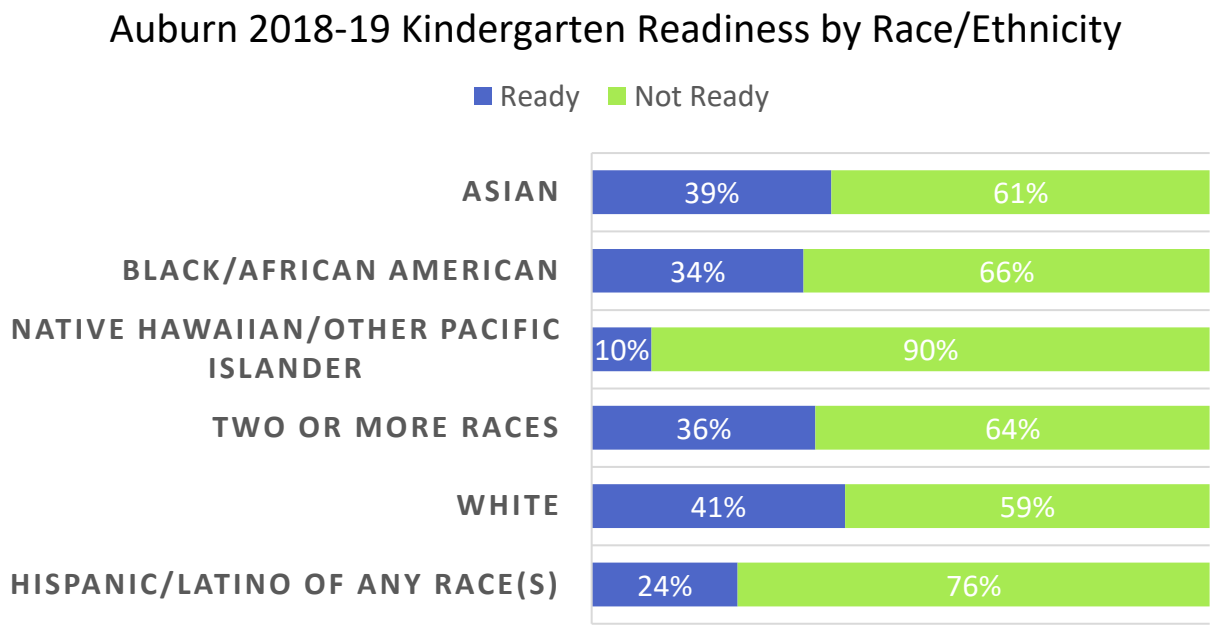
Looking at all kindergarteners in the 2018-19 school year for Auburn School District, 33.4% entered kindergarten ready in all six areas of development and learning. The chart below compares Auburn to nearby school districts.

Kindergarten Readiness

	Percent of students entering kindergarten ready in all six areas of development and learning
Auburn	**33.4**
Federal Way	43.3
Kent	44.0
Lakewood	39.7
Tacoma	46.5

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

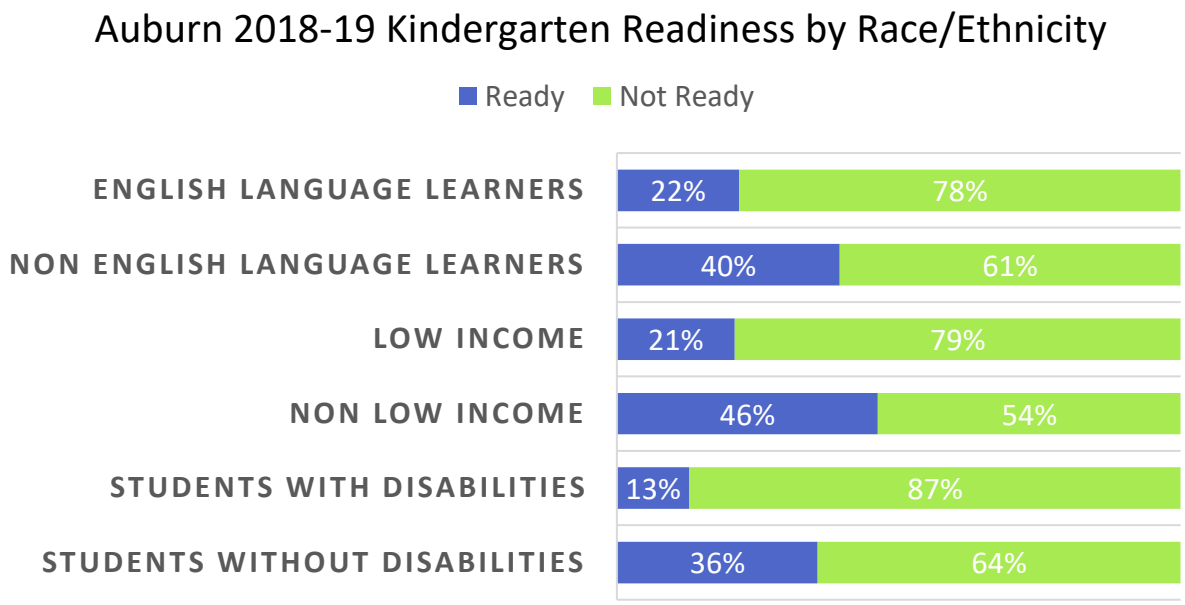
The graph below outlines those kindergarten students who presented as "ready" for the 2018-19 kindergarten school year in all six (6) categories tested within the WaKIDS assessment.



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Auburn School District

The data above indicates that those Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children are not as likely to be as ready for kindergarten compared to their peers.

There are other indicators beyond race/ethnicity that may point to students that are not as likely to be prepared for kindergarten. Similar to the above charts, the chart below identifies those students entering kindergarten that presented as "ready" in all six areas of development and learning. The chart makes evident that those students who are disadvantaged in any of the three categories below are not as likely to be as ready for kindergarten as their peers. This is true within all three categories where comparisons are made: English language learners, low-income, and those students with disabilities. At nearly a third of the rate of their peers without disabilities, 13% of students with disabilities entering kindergarten are ready in all six areas that the WaKIDS assessment considers.

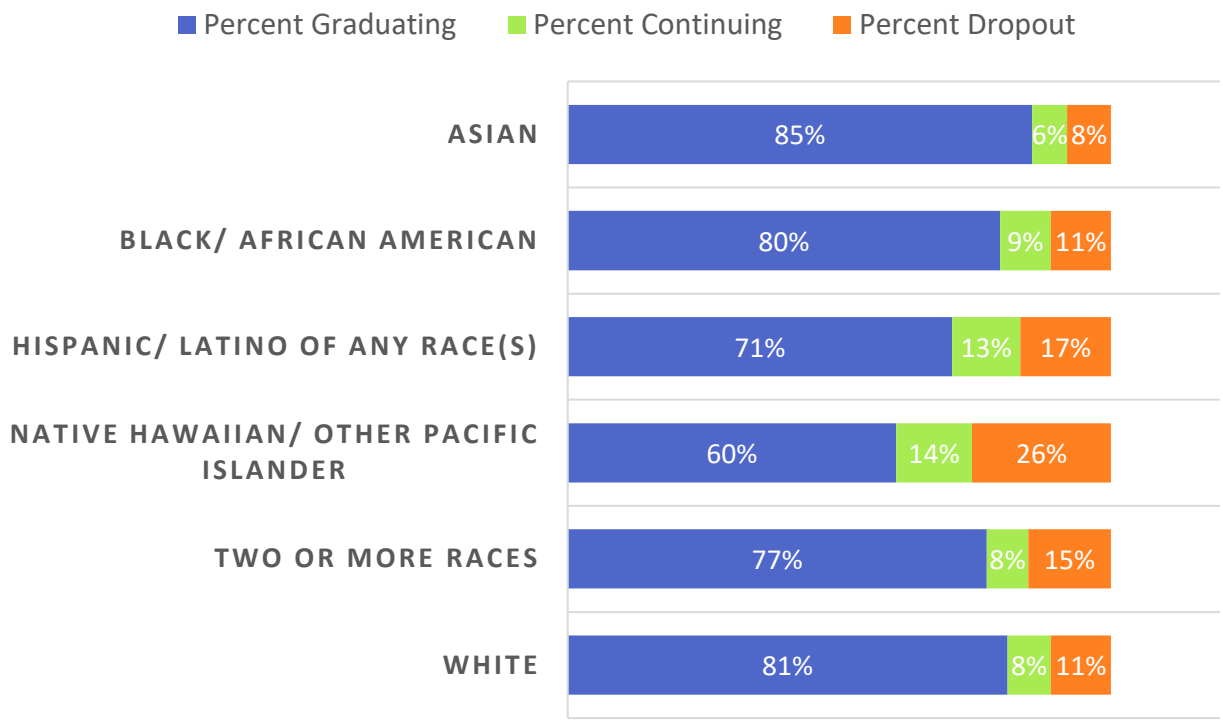


Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Auburn School District

The data above identifies kindergarten student's readiness to learn and develop in the classroom setting. A student's readiness typically indicates a greater likelihood of success in kindergarten and beyond. This however is not always the case and should not be considered objective outcome-oriented data, rather this data is reflective of opportunities where supports can be put into place to minimize gaps that the above data lays out.

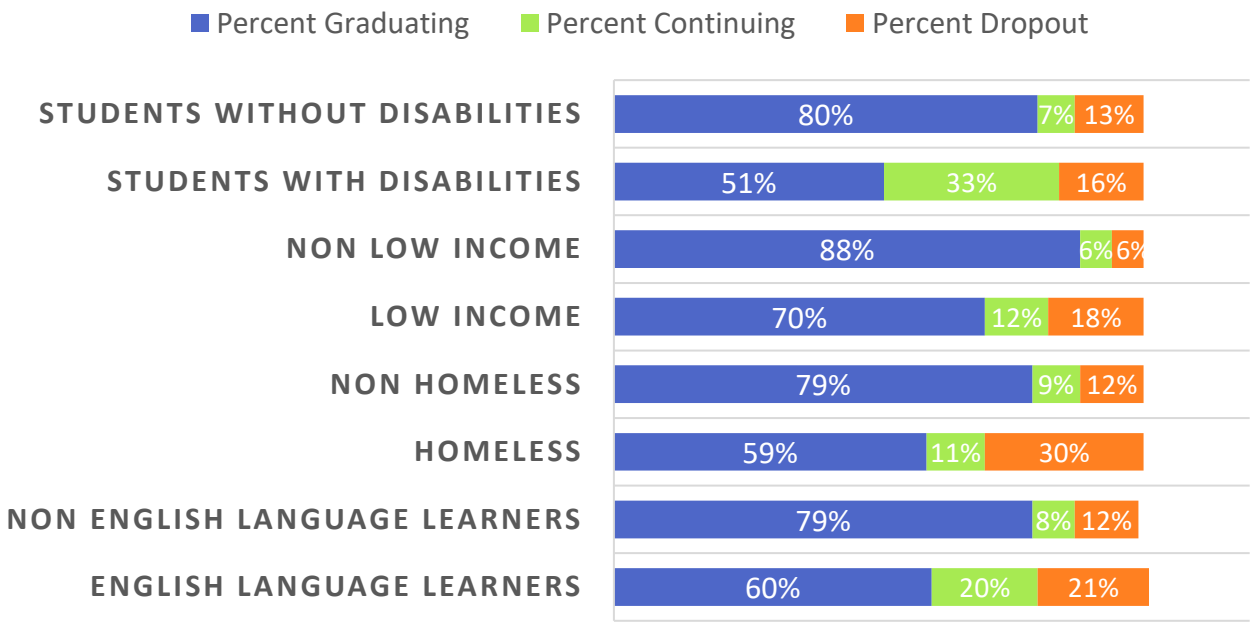
Similar to the kindergarten readiness data, the high school graduation data below indicates gaps while making comparisons across variables. The data below is the graduating class of 2018, all students who began 9th grade together. Data indicates that those students graduating high school tend to earn more, are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system and position themselves to take advantage of economic opportunities that exist within the region.

Percent of Students Graduated in Four years by race/ethnicity



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Auburn School District

Percent of Students Graduated in Four years by Student Characteristic



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Auburn School District

The most evident demographic not graduating high school in four years at a rate on par with peers is the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino of any race demographics. The graph outlining on-time graduation rates among the class of 2018 by characteristics matches relatively well with the kindergarten readiness data also looking at the same student characteristics. Those students with disabilities, from low-income families, homeless students, and English-language learners, are all significantly less likely to graduate within four years as compared to their peers.

Transportation

Transportation impacts households in a variety of ways; some of which are economic opportunities, food access, and social activities. According to 2017 ACS data, 8% of Auburn households do not have access to a vehicle. The number varies by tenure; 15% of renter households do not have access to a vehicle while 3% of owner households do not have access to a vehicle.

Having a personal vehicle may be a financial burden for those households earning less than 50% of the area median income (AMI). As noted in the *2019 Southern King County Food Access Needs Assessment* Those households that are most in need of human service programs are often those where owning or operating a vehicle may not be possible. This leaves several options to consider ensuring there is equity of access to all parts of Auburn for residents.

King County Metro Services operates several transportation services. The *Access Transportation* service is a shared-ride van service for people whose disabilities prevent them from utilizing the accessible, non-commuter, fixed route bus services. King County operates the Demand Area Response Transit (DART) which is a van that has a fixed route but is capable to deviate from its fixed route upon request. The DART service is available to everyone. King County operates a free instruction service for seniors and those persons with disabilities, training individuals on the available programs and route and service options. The County also provides a *Regional Reduced Fair Permit (RRFP)* that allows seniors aged 65 years and older, people with disabilities, and Medicare card holders to ride public transportation systems for a reduced fare.

Sound Generations operates the Hyde shuttle, which is a free shuttle for seniors 55 or older and people with disabilities. The shuttles operate Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The shuttle is able to provide a resident with service anywhere in the service area. All of Auburn is within the Auburn Hyde Shuttle service area.

Those individuals and families that rely on public transportation to meet their day-to-day needs are often disadvantaged, facing increased travel times, minimal capacity to carry goods, and dependence on transit schedules. According to the *2019 Southern King County Food Access Needs Assessment*, 29.5% of Auburn residents are underserved by public transit.

In January 2019, Hopelink in coordination with the South King County Mobility Coalition conducted a food access and transportation needs assessment. The assessment included interviews and a survey. According to several of the interviews, a primary need is the physical transportation of the food, not necessarily the individual. Those households utilizing public transit to access a food bank are restricted to what they can carry. Another highlighted need for those using public transit to access foodbanks were the high number of bus line transfers and infrequent bus service. An issue highlighted in one interview noted that often those individuals using a food bank will use a shopping cart to carry their food to a nearby bus stop. These shopping carts are often left abandoned there. This concern was also raised in the community survey for this assessment.

In June 2019, Hopelink in conjunction with the King County Mobility Coalition partnered with the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance Student Consulting Lab to complete a county-wide transportation assessment specifically geared to investigate the transportation needs of the refugee and immigrant community. The key findings from that study[4] were:

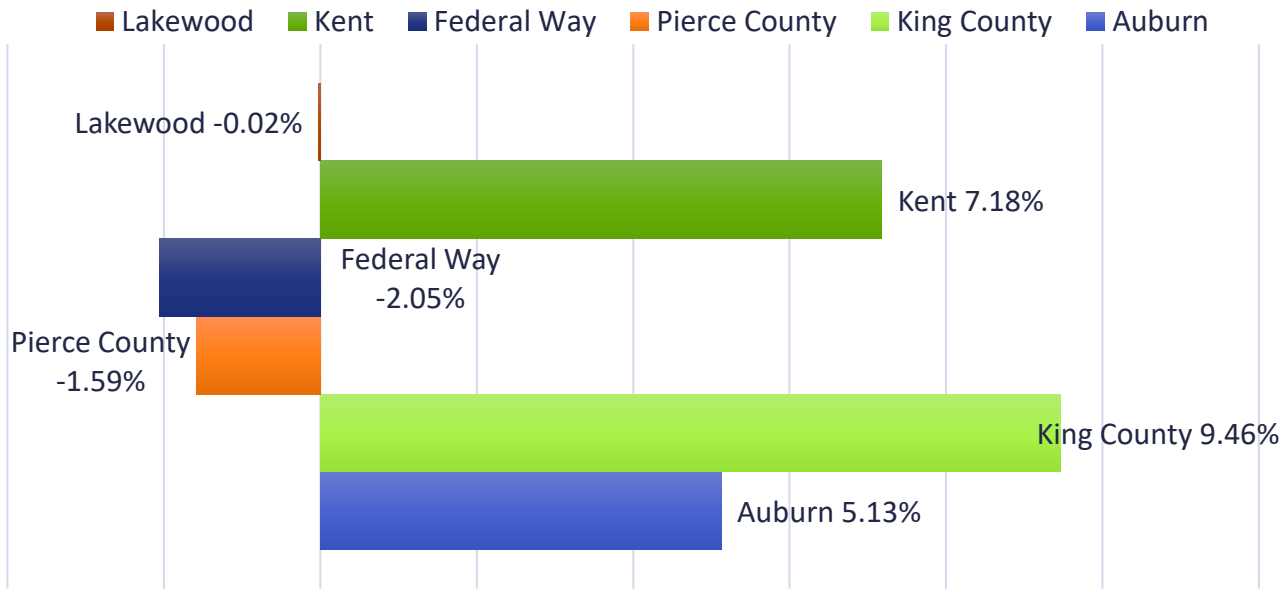
- Cost: Public transit fares present a significant barrier to immigrants and refugees. This cost barrier remains despite reduced fare programs. Addressing this issue would result in further reduced bus fares, free public transportation, and increasing the length of time before bus transfers expire.
- Lack of service: limited availability of times has public transit users spending a great deal of time in transit to their destinations. Similarly, lack of service also means inconvenient bus routes that do not serve all areas.
- Information/Language: Lack of translated information available as written, signage, and announcements are significant barriers among immigrant and refugee communities.

A key conclusion from the report states that entities operating public transit should prioritize affordability, as this impacts all low-income and vulnerable populations.

Income

Along with the steadily increasing economic opportunities within the region, median household income has grown alongside those opportunities. The chart below shows that overall, Auburn has seen just over a 5% increase in median household income (adjusted for inflation) since 2010, reaching $64,000 in 2017. This fact makes evident that indeed Auburn is closely tethering itself to the growth trend of King County and the Puget Sound region as a whole.

Median Household Income Change in Real 2017 Dollars (2010 to 2017)



Source: 2010 - 2017 ACS

[4] *Transportation Barriers and Needs for Immigrants and Refugees: An Exploratory Needs Assessment.* The University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance Graduate Consulting Lab. Taylor Bailey, Roslyn, Hower, Erica Ratner, and Suzanne Spencer.

While the overall income trend is positive, the costs of goods and services have also increased significantly. The *2017 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State*[5] outlines the needed income for households to be self-sufficient based on localized costs. According to the report, the self sufficiency standard in South King County for one adult, one preschooler, and one school-age child is $68,625 annually. Similarly, the self-sufficiency standard for two adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child is $74,083. The median annual household income in Auburn ($64,000) nearly hits these self-sufficiency numbers. Despite substantial economic growth, the pace of such growth exacerbates inequities and gaps. Without adequate economic supports those gaps risk growing larger as economic growth continues at such a rapid pace.

Another way to look at the growth trend in the region is to combine population growth with economic growth. The chart below shows the per capita income changes from 2010 and 2017.

Per Capita Income Change in Real 2017 Dollars (2010 to 2017)

	Auburn	King County	Pierce County	Federal Way	Kent	Lakewood
2017	$29,344	$46,316	$31,157	$30,288	$28,636	$26,982
2010	$29,563	$42,862	$30,787	$29,914	$28,937	$30,017
Difference	**-0.74%**	**-10.85%**	**-10.85%**	**1.25%**	**-1.04%**	**-10.11%**

Source: 2010 - 2017 ACS

From the above we can get interpret that the median income household growth is not impacting all income brackets the same way. Note that the median annual household income showed a 5.13% growth from 2010 to 2017 in Auburn. The chart above signals a slight decrease in the per capita income over the same period of time. Per capita income is the summation of all income generated in Auburn divided by the number of residents. A slight decrease in per capita income means that the average income received to each resident is slightly down. This is markedly true in King County, Pierce County, and Lakewood City, all with per capita income decreases of over 10% between 2010 and 2017.

Another indicator of the economic situation of families and households is the change in poverty rate over time. As of 2017, 13.6% of Auburn residents were living under the federal poverty limit, down 0.5 percetnage points since 2010. This slight reduction of those living in poverty is similar to that of the region as a whole; with King County showing no change since 2010 and Federal Way and Kent both reducing those living in poverty within their cities by 0.6 and 1.8 percentage points respectively.

Housing Affordability

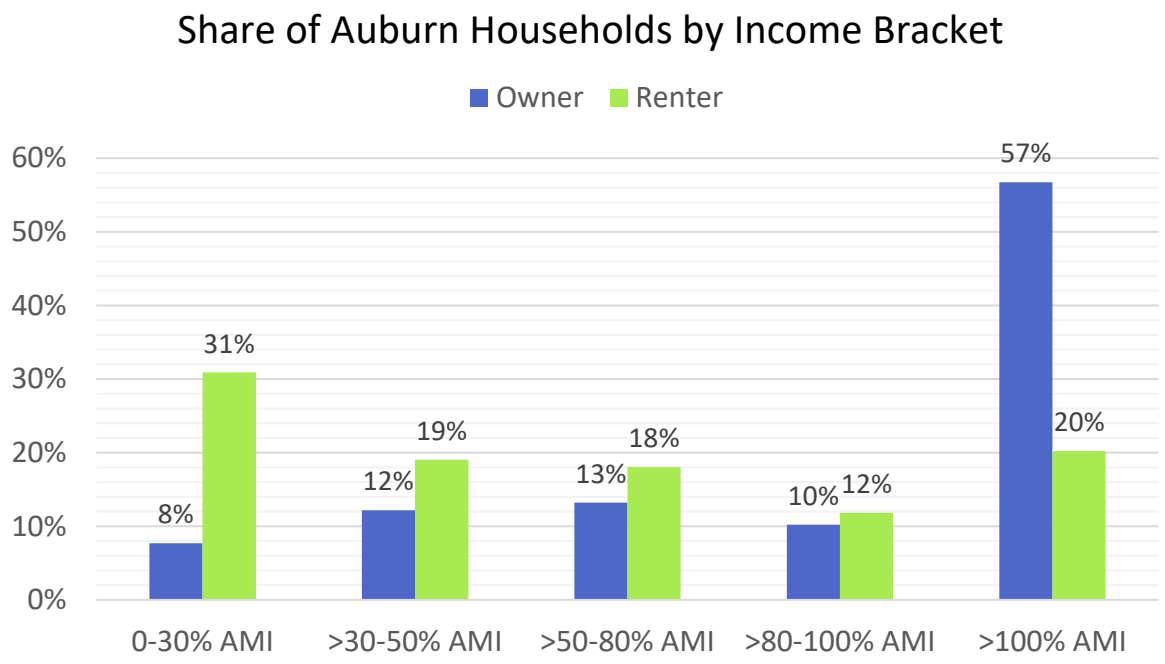
Housing costs in Auburn and the surrounding region have seen dramatic increases over the past several years. These increased costs impact all income levels as well as both owners and renter households. However, low-income renter households are often most impacted by increased housing costs given the proportion of costs is higher among those with the lowest incomes.

The dataset used in this section is developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and utilizes Area Median Income (AMI) to make determinations on program eligibility. The most recent available dataset is 2015.

Cost burden is an often-used way to identify housing needs within cities and counties. Cost burden is defined as a household that spends more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs, this includes utilities. Severe cost burden,

[5] http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/sites/default/files/selfsuff/docs/WA2017_SSS.pdf

is defined as a household that spends more than 50% of their household income on housing costs, again including utilities. The data below will first identify income groups by renter and owner households, and then breakdown those household types that are cost burdened and severely cost burdened.

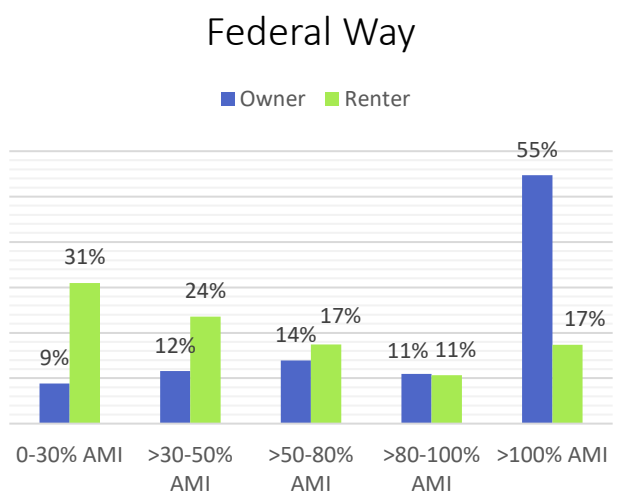


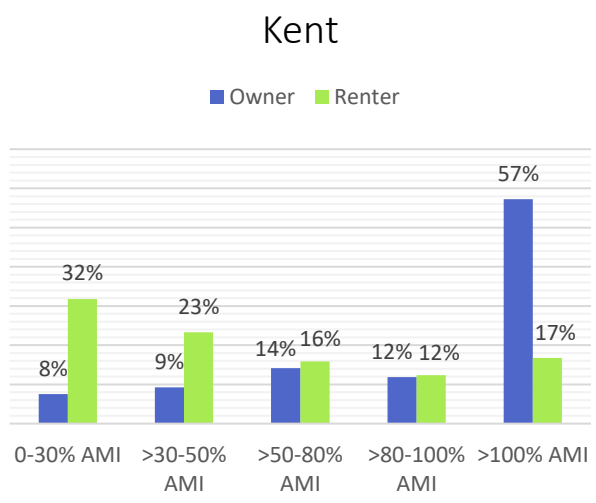
Source: 2011-2015 CHAS[6]

The chart above indicates that Auburn renter households are over-represented in lower income brackets. Over two-thirds of renter households in 2015 earned less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), and two-thirds of all owner households earn more than 80% AMI. To this point, there are also larger numbers of renter households with children in lower income brackets than compared to owner households. This information should be utilized when attempting to target programming and/or funds that may support housing stability. Given a greater percentage of renter households are low- and extremely-low income, when implementing housing support programs and services, it should be considered that renter households are more likely to be in need of financial supports.

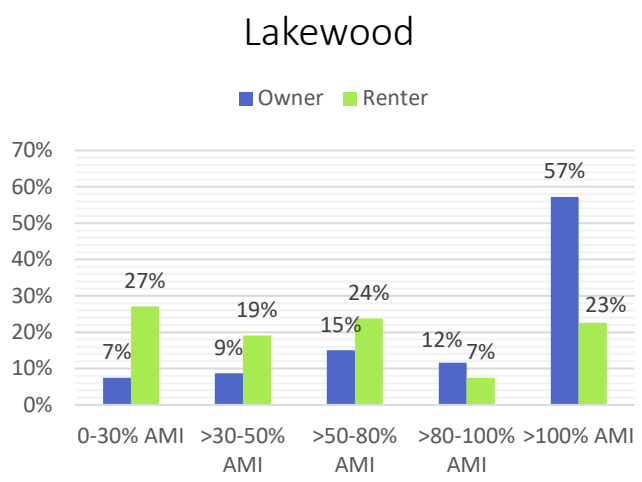
[6] The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) dataset is developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development each year. The most recent CHAS dataset available is 2015. Similar to ACS data within this report, when CHAS data is used, it is the 5-year estimate.

The graphs below show the breakdown of owner/renter households by income bracket for Pierce and King County, as well as Federal Way, Kent, and Lakewood.





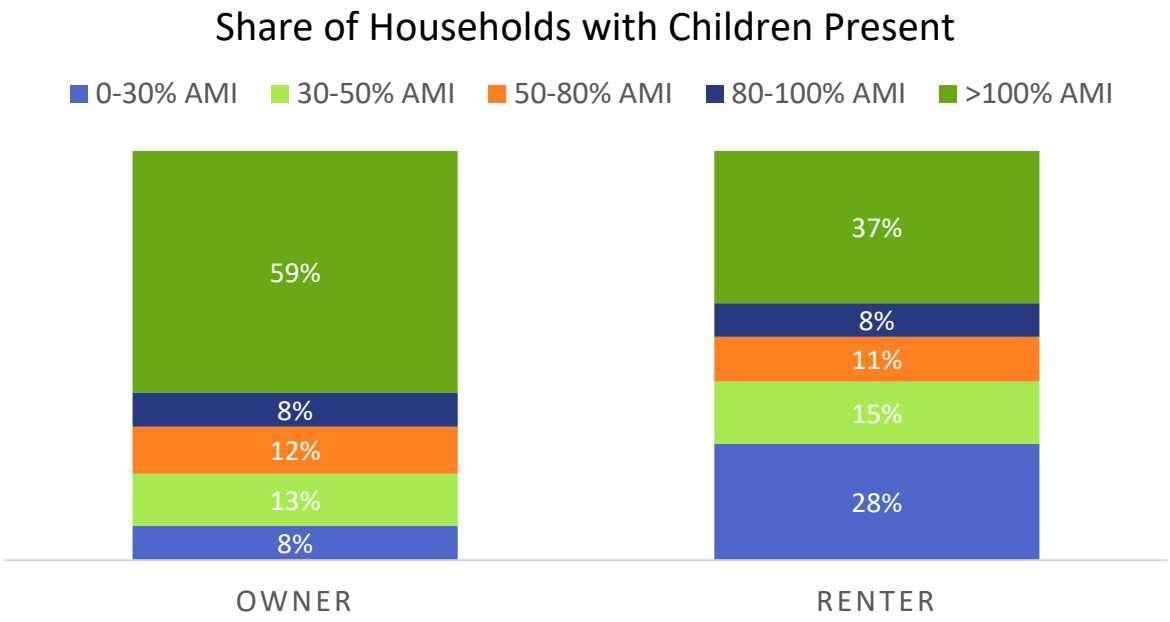
Source: 2011-2015 CHAS



Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

Comparing the number of households within each income bracket, Auburn compares similarly to its neighbor cities. In all instances, nearly 70% of renter households are considered low- or moderate-income, earning less than 80% of the area median income (AMI). Similarly, among all cities identified, nearly one-third of renter households earn 0-30% of the AMI, while in all instances less than 10% of owner households do so.

The graph below shows the number of households with children under the age of six (6), broken down by income bracket.



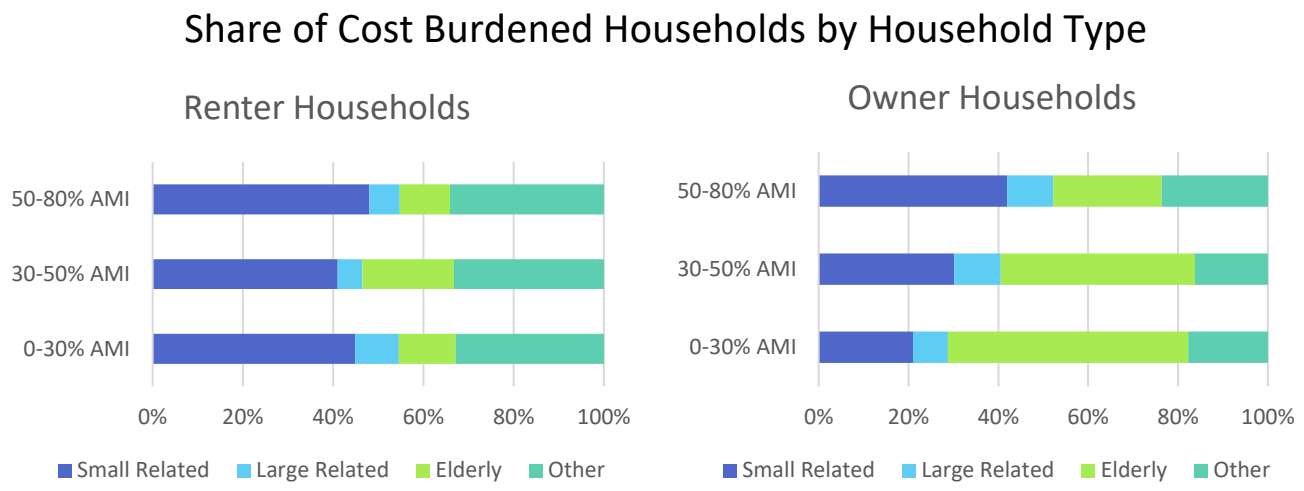
Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

Given that there are significantly more renter households nearer the lower end of the income brackets, it is expected that there would also be a larger representation of renter households with children in the lower income brackets.

Housing problem data are collected by HUD each year, the housing problems are divided into four categories:

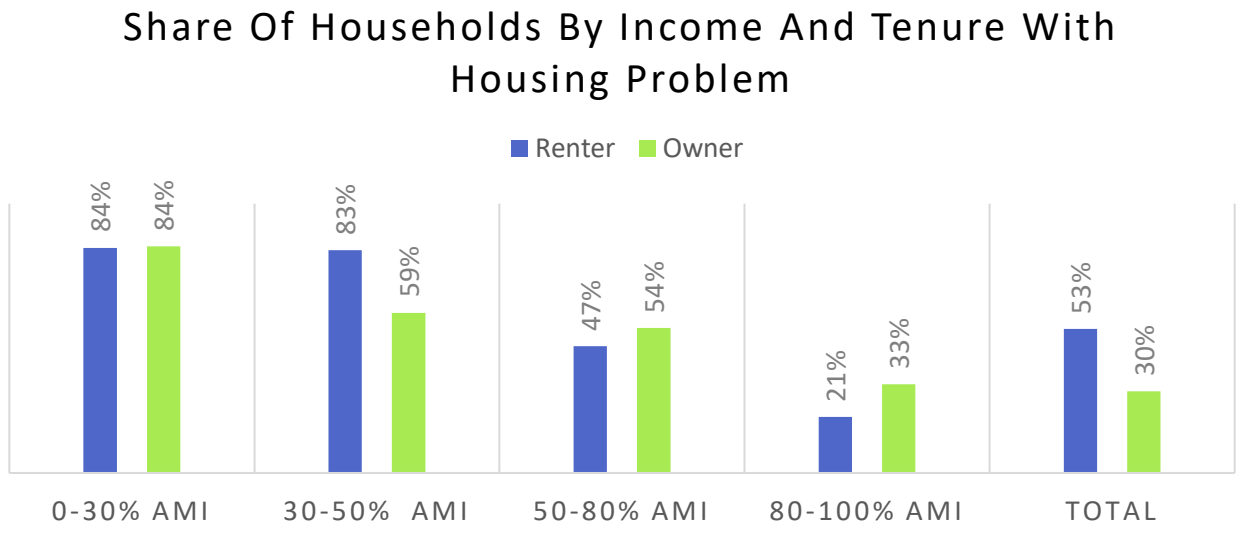
1. Substandard housing – Lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities
2. Overcrowded – With 1.01 to 1.51 people per room
3. Cost burden – Paying more than 30% of monthly household income in housing costs
4. Severe cost burden – Paying more than 50% of monthly household income in housing costs

Overwhelmingly, the households that do experience a housing problem from the four listed above, experience cost burden. Of all the renter households experiencing a housing problem, 81% experience cost burden. Similarly, of all owner households in Auburn experiencing a housing problem, 88% experience cost burden. The graph below indicates the types of households experiencing cost burden in both renter and owner households (only including those households below 80% AMI).



Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

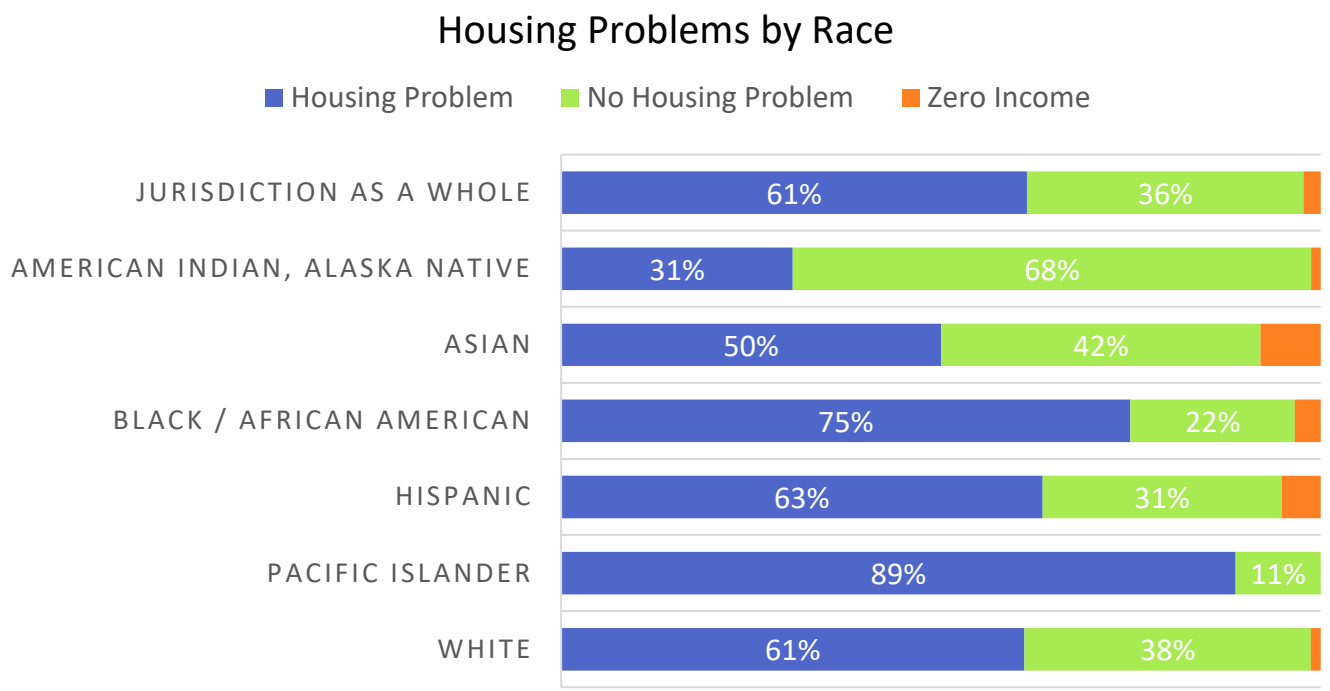
The data above indicates that cost burdened renter households are most likely to be small related families (up to four (4) family members) or *Other*, which is most often assocaited with single-person households. This analysis remains true for all income brackets. However, owner households that are cost burdened are far more likely to be elderly households. Those elderly households living in a home they own, are far more likely to be cost burdened. This indicates a high need for supports that will allow an elderly household to age in place while likely living on a fixed income.



Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

The above graph shows that those households with income below 50% AMI experience housing problems at a very high rate. Nearly 85% of all renter households earning less than 50% AMI experience a housing problem. Overall, just over half of all renter households in Auburn experience a housing problem, with nearly one-third of owner households experiencing a housing problem.

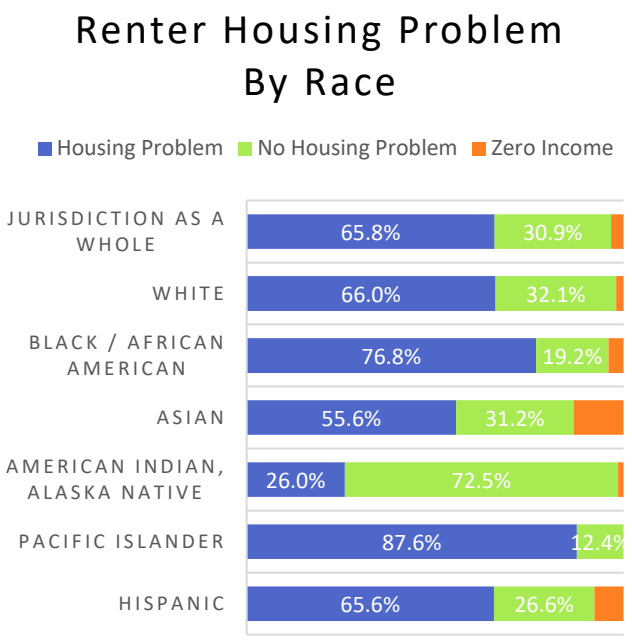
HUD also collects data on disprportionate housing needs based on racial demographics. A disproportionate housing need is identified when a particular group displays a ratio of housing need that is more than ten (10) percentage points above the jurisdictional need as a whole. The graph below displays housing needs by Race.

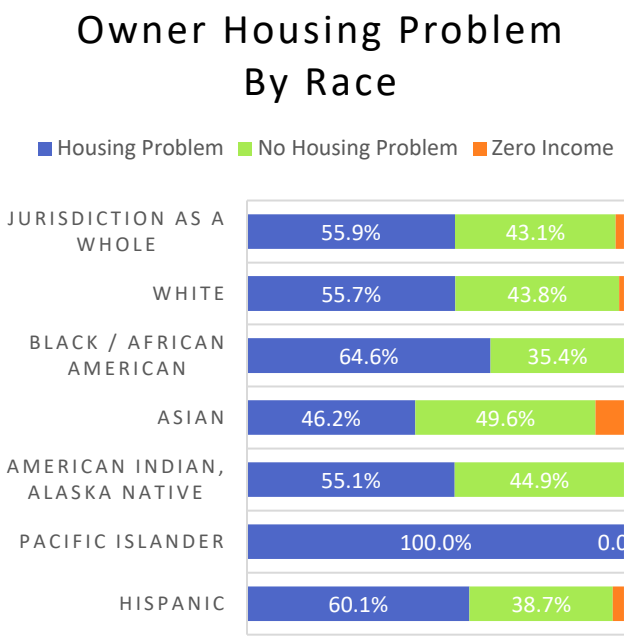


Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

From the above data, it is shown that both Black/African American and Pacific Islander households experience housing problems at a disproportionate rate as compared to the jurisdiction as a whole. With 61% of Auburn households experiencing a housing problem, Black/African households and Pacific Islander households experience housing problems at fourteen (14) and twenty-eight (28) percentage points above the jurisdiction as a whole.

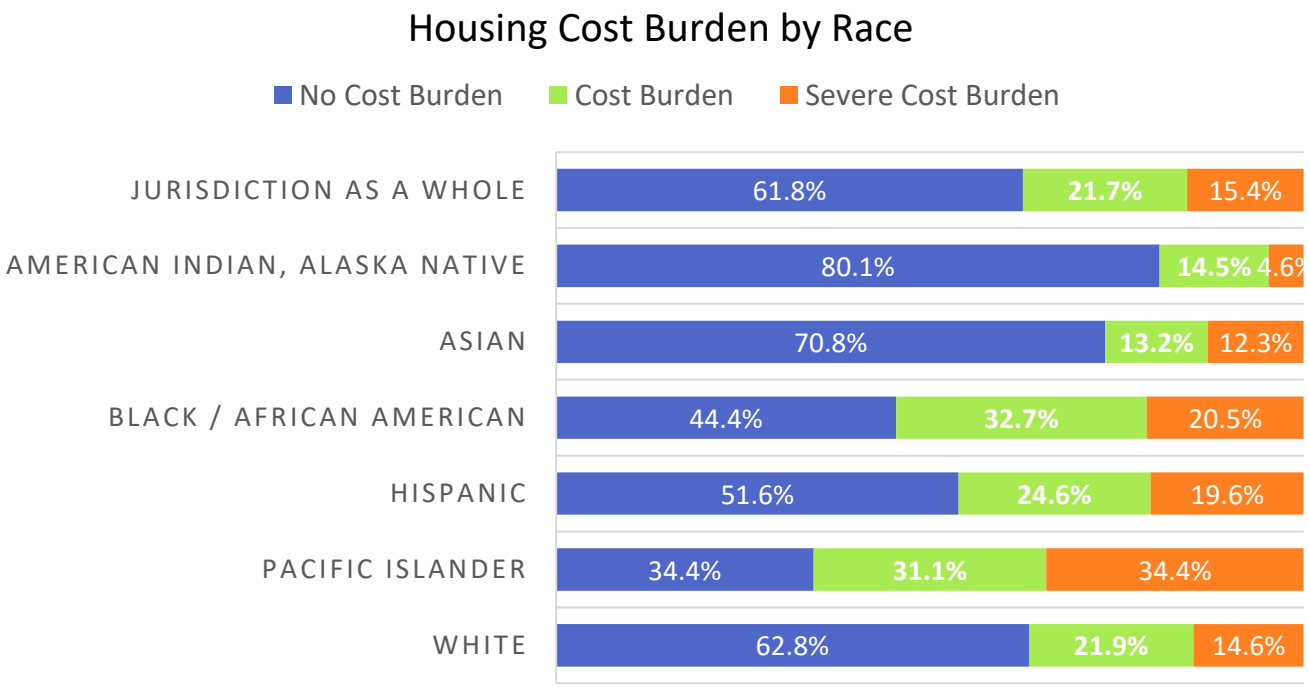
Breaking down the above graph into renter and owners, there are several areas of disproportionate need. Among renter households, Black/African American (76.8%) and Pacific Islander (87.6%) households experience a housing problem greater than ten (10) percentage points above the jurisdiction as a whole (65.8%). Among owner households, Pacific Islander households experience a housing problem at 100%; there are 25 Pacific Islander households identified in this dataset.





Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

The graph below displays housing cost burden, both 30% cost burden and 50% cost burden, by Race. Similar to the above graph, the graph below is working to identify disproportionate needs. Those households experiencing cost burden at a rate of more than ten (10) percentage points are considered to have a disproportionate need from HUD's perspective.



Source: 2011-2015 CHAS

Considering cost burdened and severe cost burdened households, the above graph indicates that Black/African American households experience cost burden at a disproportionately high rate, while Pacific Islander households experience severe cost burden at a disproportionately higher rate.

Fair Housing

In 2019, King County updated their Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, the update of this document includes fair housing testing. Fair housing testing throughout King County was conducted by the Fair Housing Center of Washington. Testing consists of two types, policy-oriented testing and differential treatment testing. The policy-oriented testing identifies discriminatory property management policies that place additional barrier to housing on a person due to their inclusion in a protected class. Differential treatment testing looks at the treatment of a person in search of housing based upon a protected class status. The testing that was done was County-wide; consisting of eighty-two (82) total tests, 16 policy checks and 66 differential treatment checks. Below is a breakdown of where the testing was done throughout the County:

Fair Housing Testing in King County

Region	*Discriminatory Policy*	*Differential Treatment*	*Grand Total*
South	9	32	41
North/East	7	34	41
Total	16	66	82

Source: 2019 King County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Public Review Draft

Of those 41 fair housing tests completed in South King County, 18 (44%) were positive. Of those 41 tests conducted in South King County, 8 were done within Auburn. Below are the testing results that were conducted within Auburn

Fair Housing Testing in Auburn

	Discriminatory Policy	*Differential Treatment*	*Grand Total*
Positive	0	4	4
Negative	1	3	4
Total	1	7	8

Source: 2019 King County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Public Review Draft

Of the differential treatment tests done in Auburn, those that were positive were either on account of race (2) or national origin (2). A positive test does not necessarily mean fair housing rules and laws are being violated, rather the Fair Housing Center of Washington recommends that additional testing be done to determine if the positive test is a pattern for those particular housing sites.

Homelessness

Each year the Point In Time count (PIT) is conducted on a single night in January to offer a snapshot of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. The PIT Count is conducted within King County by All Home, the regional Continuum of Care, and results are reported out regionally; Auburn is part of the *Southwest County* region along with: Algona, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Milton, Normandy Park, Pacific, Renton, SeaTac, Tukwila, and Vashon Island. Though imperfect and nationally recognized as a likely undercount, this is often the best snapshot available in

communities to understand trends in homelessness year after year. It is important to note that these responses are self-reported.

The unsheltered counts from the 2019 PIT Report are below:

2019 Regional PIT Count

Region	Persons on streets/outside	Persons in tents	Persons in buildings	Persons in car	Persons in RV	Persons in van	Total unsheltered persons	*% of total*
East County	40	16	2	203	35	41	**337**	***6%***
North County	23	16	2	13	15	16	**85**	***2%***
Northeast County	6	39	13	9	28	4	**99**	***2%***
Seattle	1,105	1,162	46	385	621	239	**3,558**	***68%***
Southeast County	0	7	20	25	9	4	**65**	***1%***
Southwest County	332	195	57	303	115	82	**1,084**	***21%***
Total	**1,506**	**1,435**	**140**	**938**	**823**	**386**	**5,228**	*100%*

Source: Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness: 2019

The above chart indicates that 21% of all unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in King County are in the Southwest region of the County. Although the total number of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in King County in 2019 is down from 2018; the number within the Southwest region of King County is up. Only the Southwest region of the County experienced a net increase in unsheltered homelessness from 2018 to 2019.

While conducting the PIT count, those individuals experiencing homelessness are asked what the event or condition was that led to their current homelessness situation. The top responses were:

1. Loss of a job (24%)
2. Alcohol or drug use (16%)
3. Eviction (15%)
4. Divorce/Separation (9%)
5. Rent increases (8%)

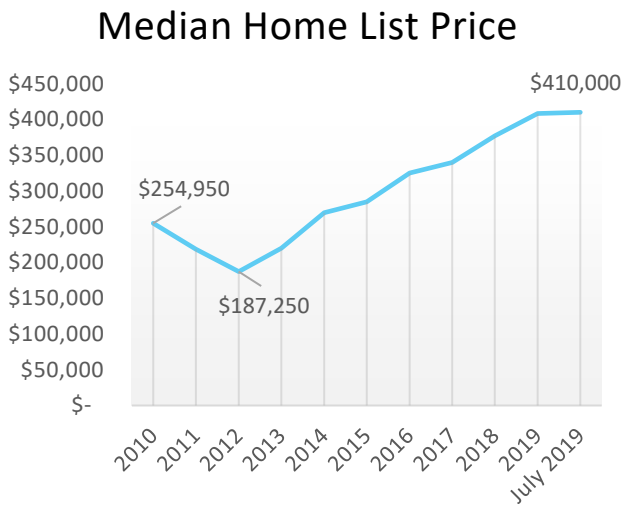
According to the December 2017 McKinsey & Company report, *King County and Seattle Homelessness – Some Facts*, the regional Crisis Response System (CRS) has improved however it is unable to meet the demand of newly homeless individuals. A primary factor for this is a shortage of affordable housing, including both rent increases and homes prices that are out of reach for those households earning less than 80% of the area median income (AMI). It is estimated that for every $100 increase in rent, there is an associated increase in homelessness between 15 and 19 percent. [7]

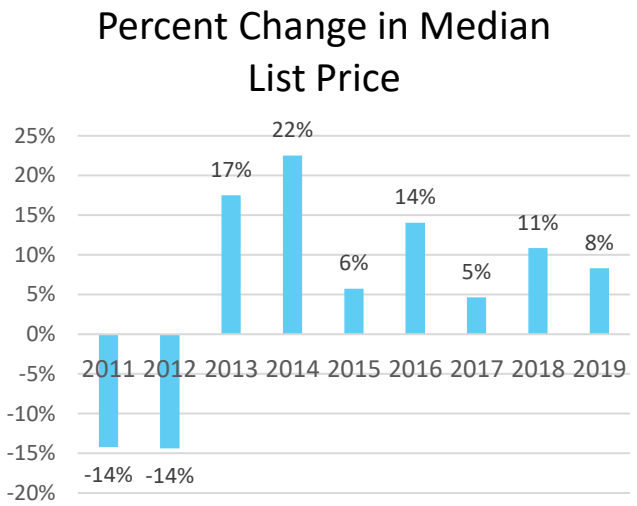
During interviews with young adults accessing services, they noted appreciation for "the city being cleaned up; sometimes there's vandalism…and the city cleans it up right away." Young adults associated cleanliness with safety and feel this effort to keep the city clean "presents a much stronger image."

[7] Journal of Urban Affairs

Home and Rental Values

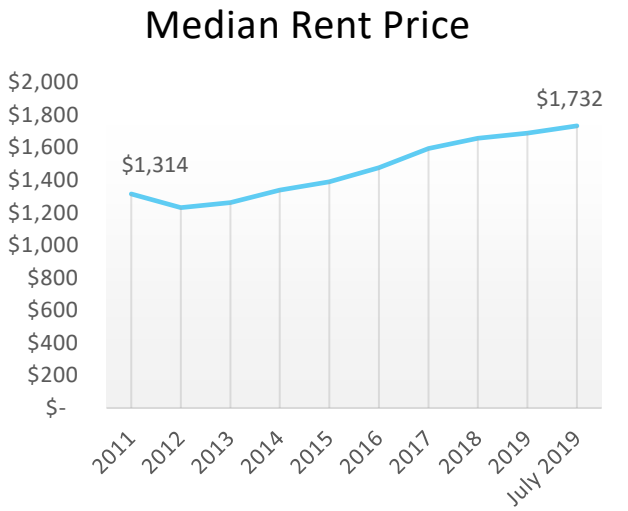
As is similar with the entire region, the housing costs in Auburn have seen a substantial increase over the past several years. The charts below outline the increases in costs for purchasing a home. The average sales price in Auburn has increased by 63% since 2010, reaching a price of $384,000 as of July 2019. Similarly, the median listing price of all homes for sale in Auburn has increased by 61% since 2010, reaching $410,000 as of July 2019.

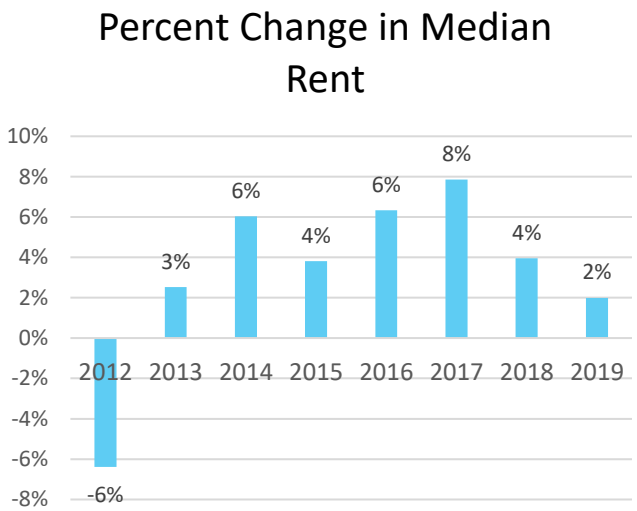




Source: Zillow Economic Data

The substantial increases in the costs for pruchasing a home have pushed many lower-income buyers out of the market. Looking more closely at rental rates, the data shows a similar trend.





Source: Zillow Economic Data

The rental market trend line matches relatively closely with the housing market; seeing a low in 2012, and steadily increasing since. Since 2011 the median rental rate has increased by 32%, reaching $1,732 as of July 2019. Over the same period of time, the median rental rate in King County increased by 46%, peaking in July of 2019 at $2,161.

The substantial housing cost increase in both purchasing and renting places pressure on all income brackets, however, the pressure is felt greatest at the lowest brackets, those households earning 80% or less of the area median income. Due to the down payment requirements when purchasing a home, the lower income brackets create a larger share of renter households. Of those households earning 0-50% of AMI, 63% are renter households. Of those households earning 80-100+% of AMI, 24% are renter households.

According to the 2019 Out of Reach[8] study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the mean renter wage in King County is $27.05/hour. To not put that household into a cost burdened situation, the household could afford up to $1,406 in rent. As rental rates continue to increase, those households earning less than 80% of AMI will need supports to make ends meet, putting themselves into positions where economic opportunities are reasonably obtainable.

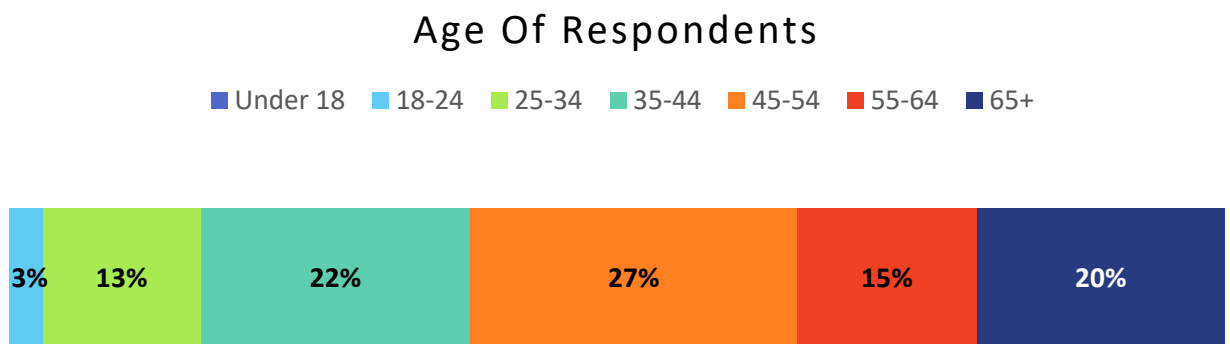
Survey Results

For this *Community Needs Assessment*, two surveys were conducted. One survey for general public, asking residents to weigh in on prioritization and changes they are seeing in their communities. A second survey was given to Auburn City staff whose job function has them linking residents to resources, asking these staff persons to identify issues and barriers they are seeing in access to services.

Resident Survey

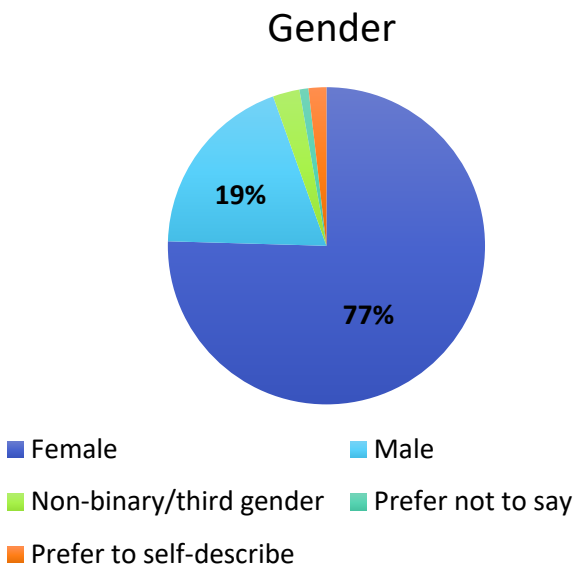
The survey was developed in conjunction with Auburn City staff, translated into Spanish, and disseminated through online networks, listservs, and made available at kiosks at local events. The survey was made available to the public for ten (10) weeks, outreach was conducted at various points throughout the survey being open. There was a total of 109 responses to the survey, below is a summary of those responses.

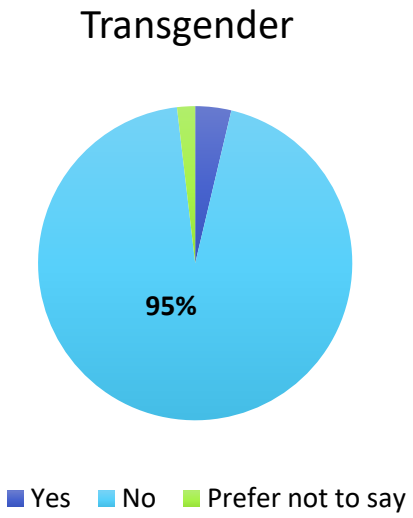
Demographics

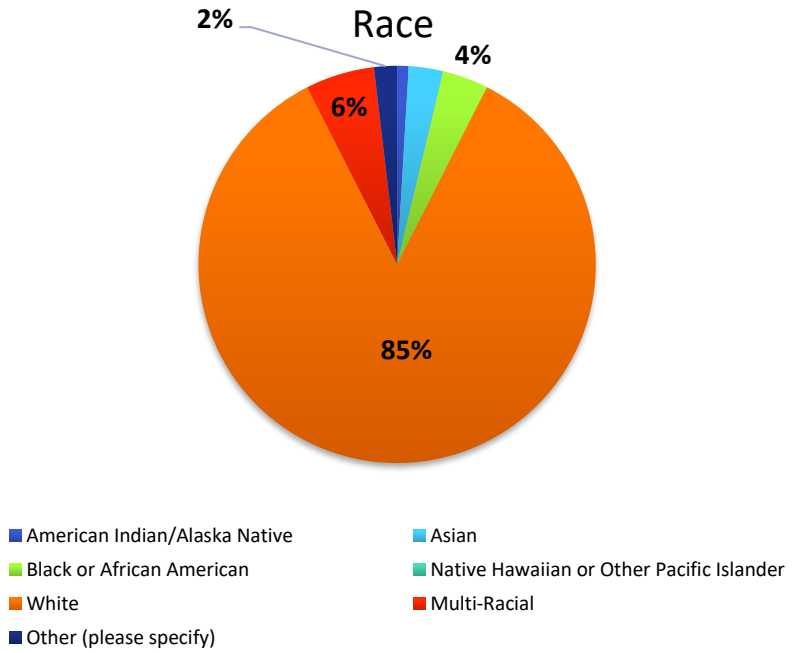


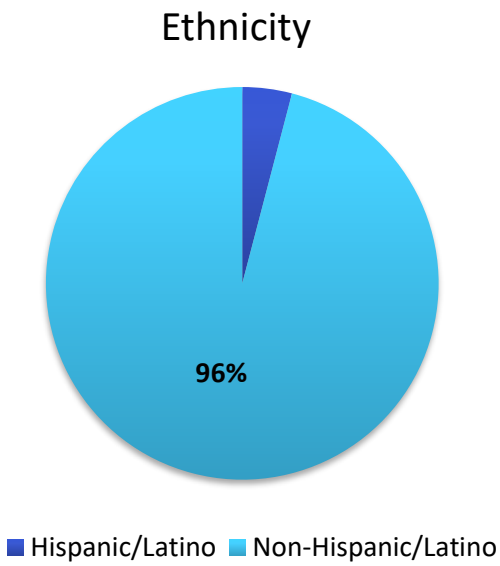
Nearly half (49%) of the respondents fall between the ages of 35 to 54 years old. There were no respondents below the age of 18.

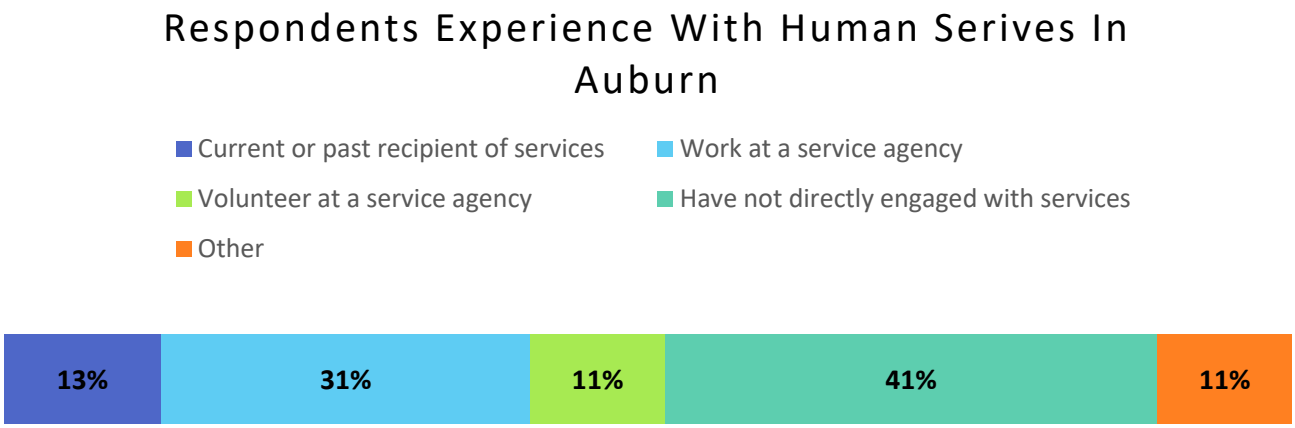
[8] https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/washington


Gender
19%
77%
Female
Male
Non-binary/third gender
Prefer not to say
Prefer to self-describe


Transgender
95%
Yes
No
Prefer not to say

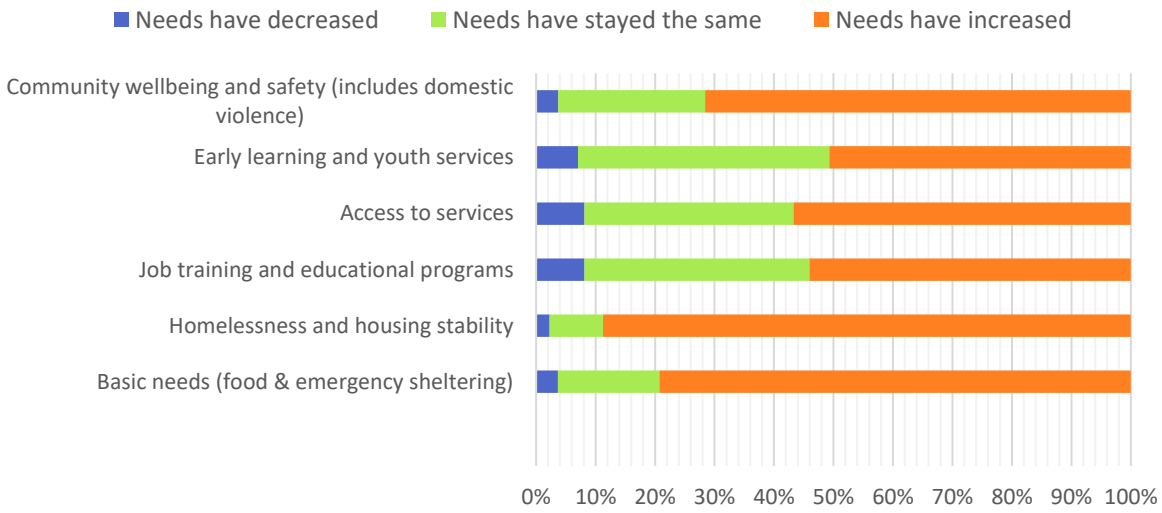

Race
2%
4%
6%
85%
American Indian/Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Multi-Racial
Other (please specify)


Ethnicity
96%
Hispanic/Latino
Non-Hispanic/Latino



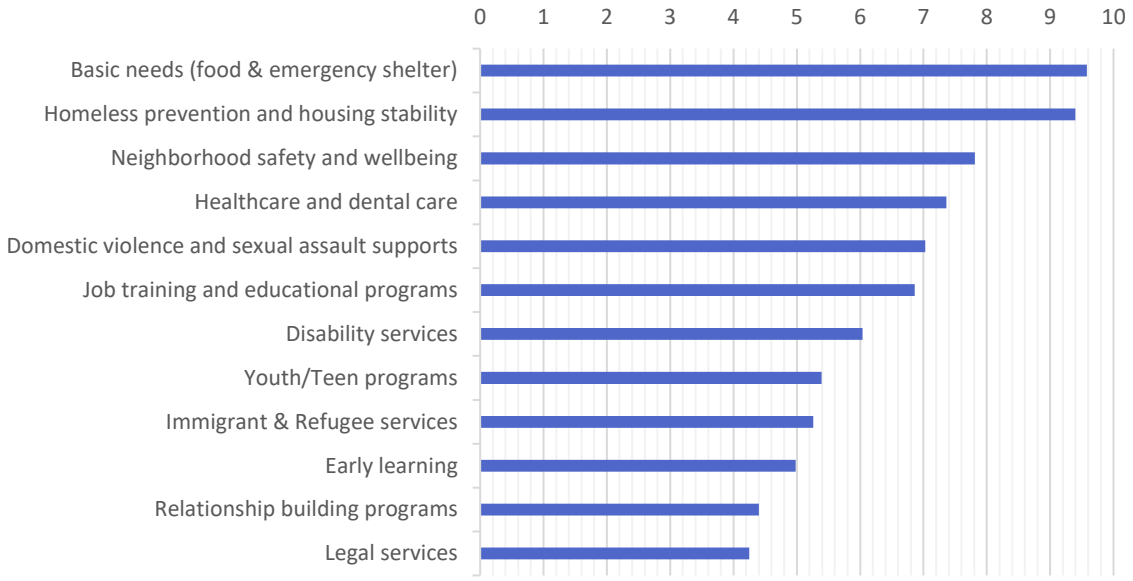
Community Needs

Q.1 - From your experience and understanding, for the categories listed, please indicate if the needs within you community have decreased, stayed the same, or increased in the past five years:



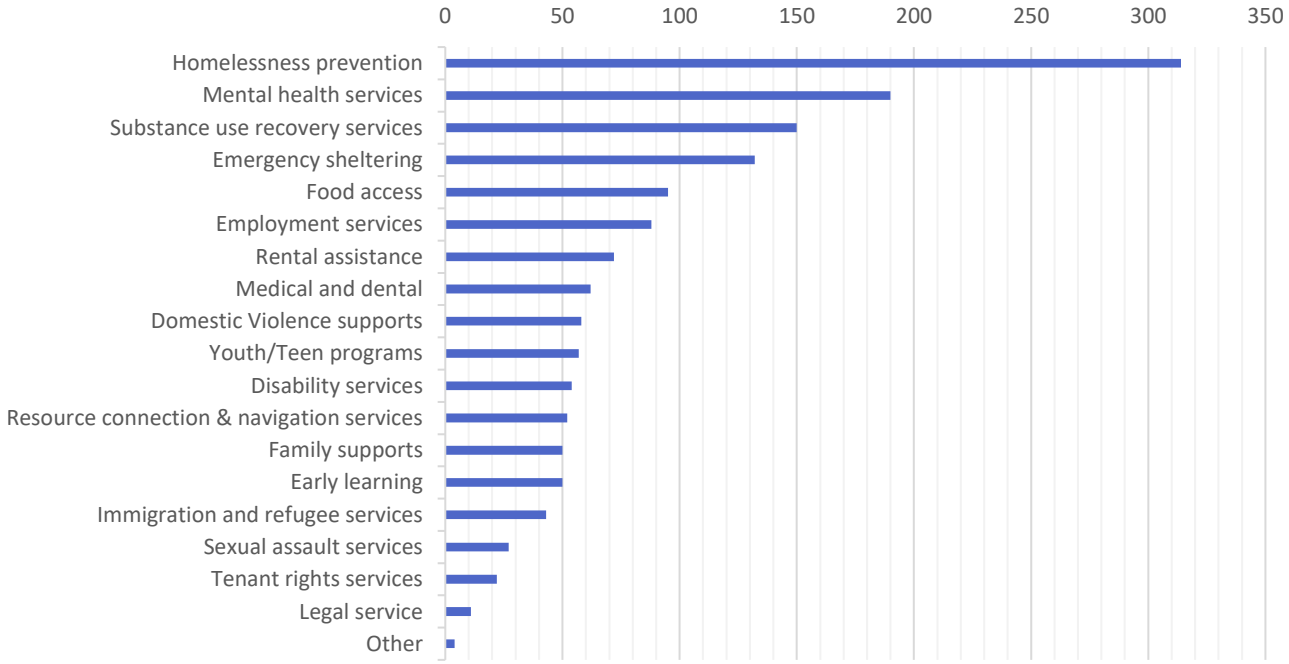
In all categories above, over 50% of survey respondents indicated that they believe needs have increased. The categories with the highest percent of respondents indicating needs have increased are homelessness and housing stability (89%) and basic needs (79%).

Q. 2 - From your experience and understanding, please rank the community needs from highest to lowest (0=low and 10=high)



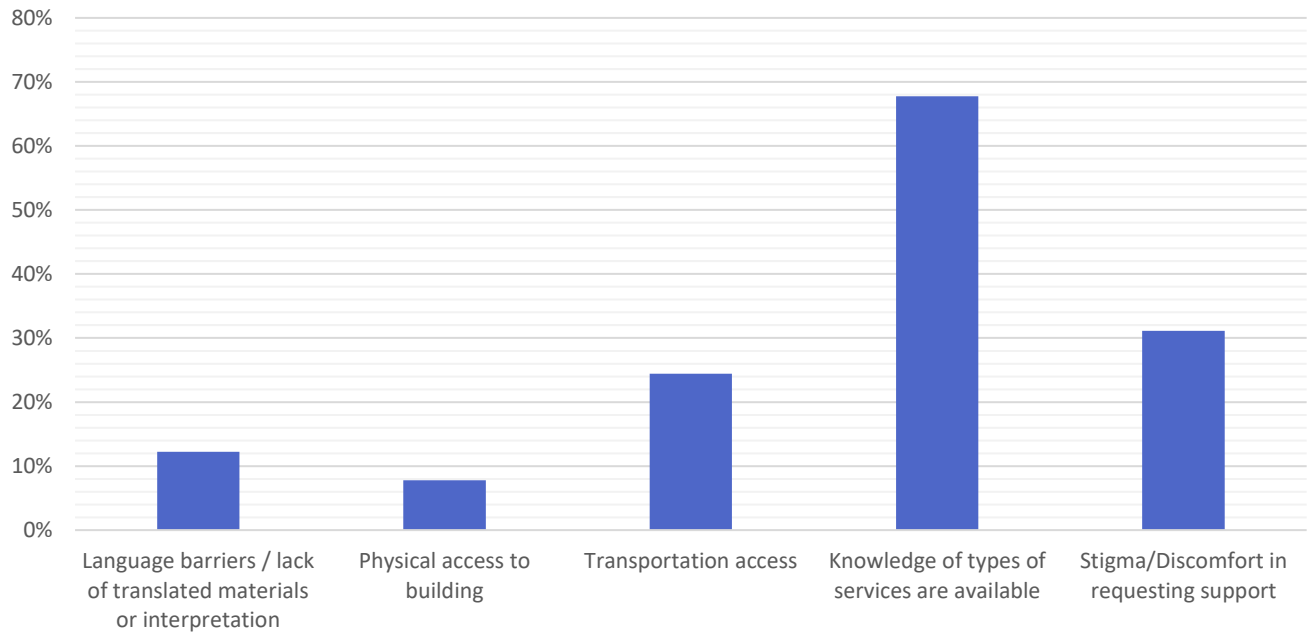
The scores outlined above are a weighted 0-10 ranking. Further echoing *Question 1*, basic needs and homelessness/housing stability are among the top issues for survey respondents.

Q. 3 - From your experience and understanding, please rank the top 5 types of services needed in your community.



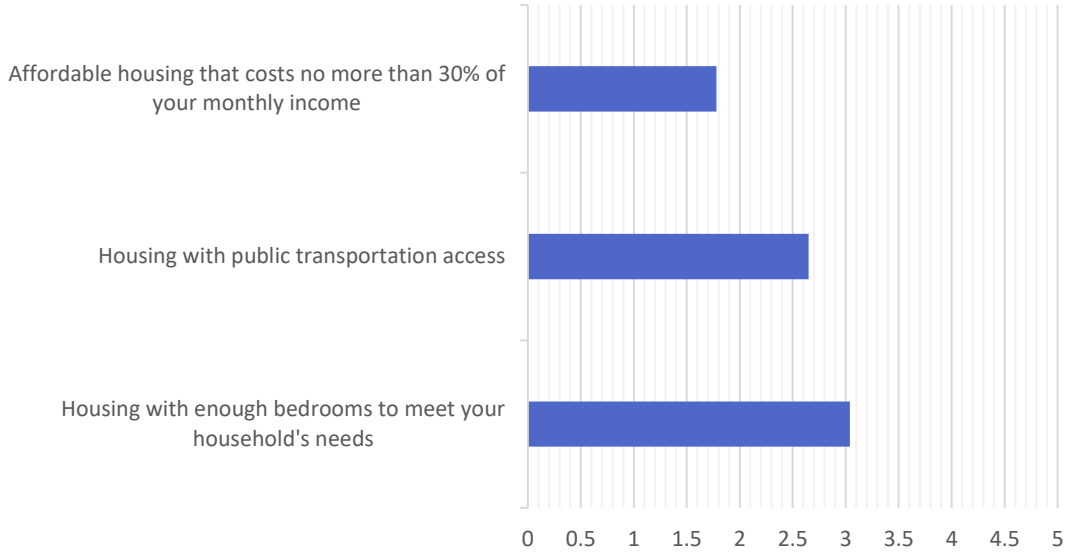
The above graph outlines a weighted score given to each response. A rank of 1, the highest community need, was assigned 5 points, while a rank of 5 was assigned 1 point. Like questions 1 and 2, homelessness prevention was at the top of issues respondents are seeing as the largest need in their community.

Q. 4 – Please identify any barriers you have experienced while attempting to obtain services in Auburn.



Of those respondents identifying barriers to access services in Auburn, knowing what types of services Auburn offers was the primary barrier. About one-third of respondents identified stigma as a barrier and 25% listed transportation as a barrier to Auburn services

Q. 5 – For the following three (3) statements, rate the availability of housing within Auburn from a scale of 0-5. Zero indicates lack of availability, 5 indicates an adequate supply.



Results from question 5 indicate that the respondents believe the availability of affordable housing in Auburn is relatively low, receiving an aggregate score of 1.78 out of 5. This perception of limited affordable housing availability is rooted in market realities. The limited availability of affordable housing is reflected by the number of cost burdened households; impacting both renter and owner households. This concern echoes many of the other key takeaways from the survey: the issue of homelessness and basic needs (food & shelter) is inextricably linked to the cost of housing. Survey respondents identified housing with public transportation access in short supply (2.65) and housing with enough bedrooms closer to an adequate supply (3.04).

Q. 6 – Are there additional types of human services that are needed in Auburn?

This was an open-ended question. Key themes that emerged were the issue of homelessness, mental health and substance abuse services, and services/transportation for specific populations (seniors, youth, persons with a disability).

Of the services brought up in the responses to this question, Auburn is or has funded organizations providing those services. However, these responses contribute to the general theme of the survey that the highest priority needs in Auburn are related to homelessness/housing stability, mental health/substance abuse services, and transportation.

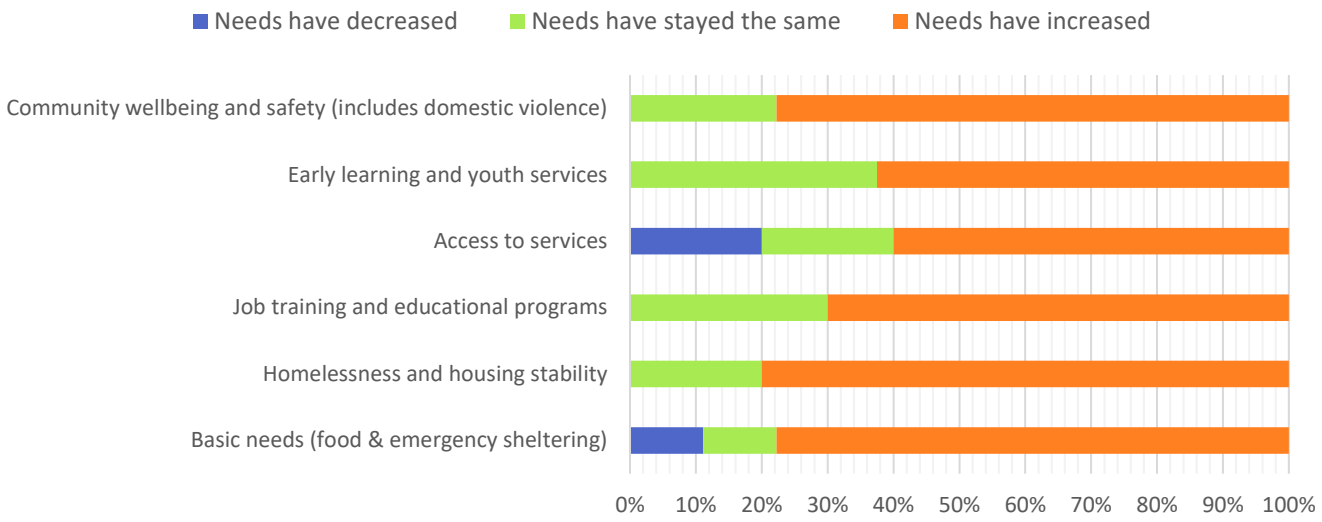
Q. 7 – Please enter additional feedback or comments you may have regarding human services in Auburn

The respondents' comments to this prompt further illustrate what the previous questions have highlighted. The issue of homelessness in the community at-large is at the forefront of many of the respondents. Several strengths were pointed out by residents, namely the Auburn School District in their capacity to address students with special needs, and City Staff for their collaborative approach in issue identification and problem-solving.

Staff Survey

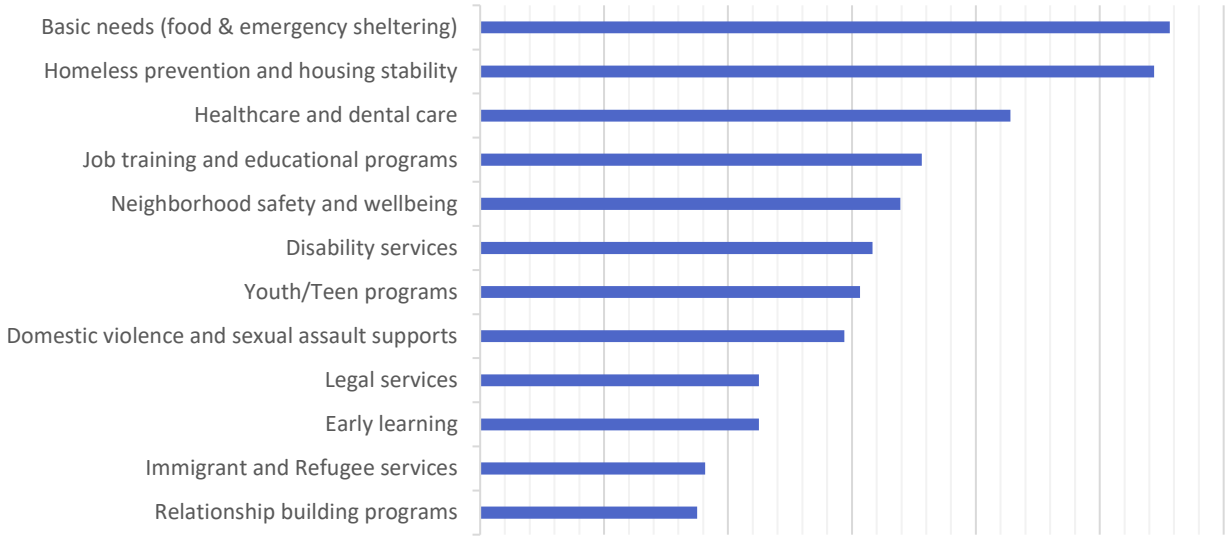
The staff survey was developed in conjunction with Auburn City staff and disseminated by Auburn City Staff to their colleagues whom hold positions that connect residents to human services. The *Staff Survey* was only intended for public-facing city staff who help connect residents to services as part of their role. Target staff groups: parks, arts, and recreation staff, community services, code enforcement, utilities, police department, mayor's office. Invitation intended to reach approximately 65-70 city staff. There was a total of 10 responses to the survey, below is a summary of those responses.

Q. 1 - From your experience and understanding, for the categories listed, please indicate if the needs within you community have decreased, stayed the same, or increased in the past five years:



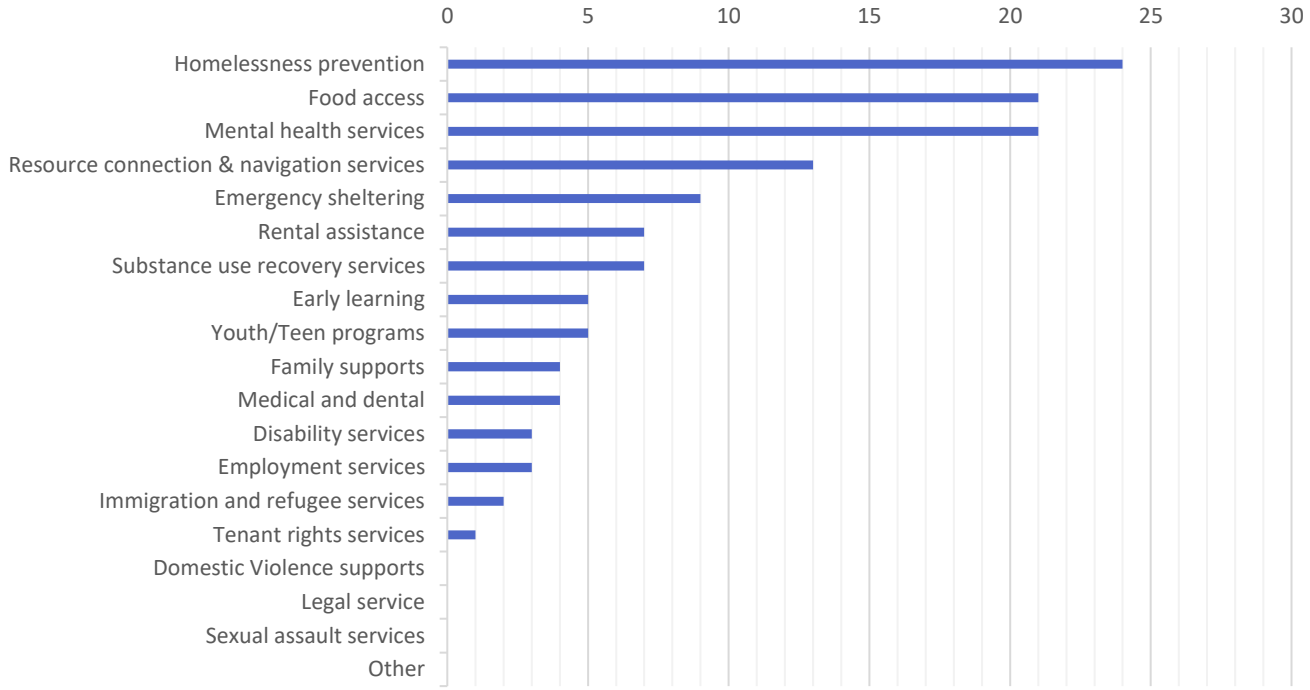
The majority of staff survey respondents identified all types of services as having increased in need over the past 5 years. Like the resident survey, staff also listed homelessness/housing stability, basic needs, and community wellbeing as the top three categories.

Q. 2 - From your experience and understanding, please rank the types of services by need in your community



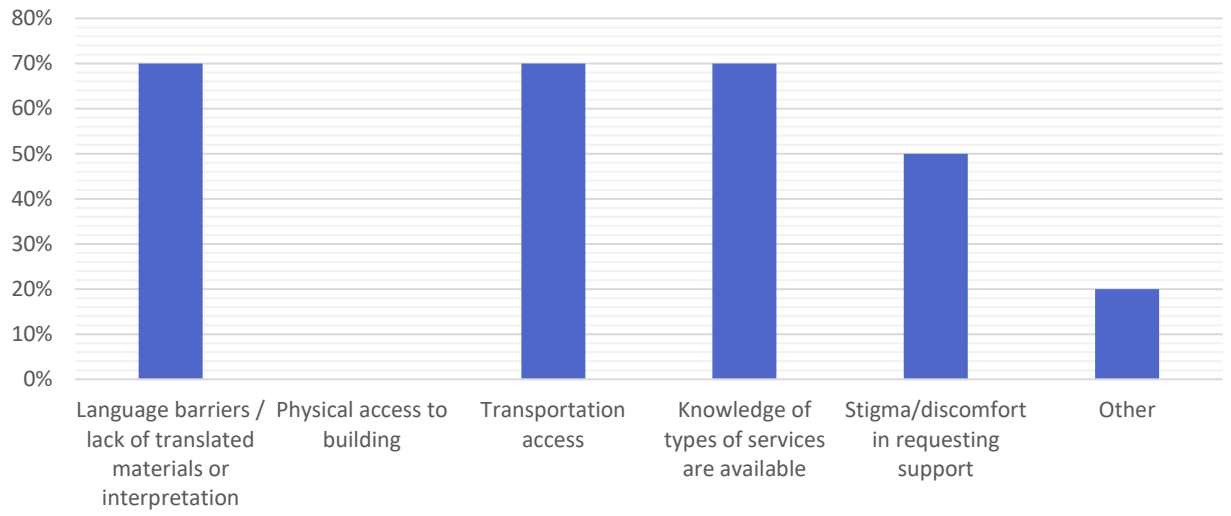
The above graph outlines the weighted score for each type of service. The top two listed, basic needs and homeless prevention/housing stability are identically ordered from the resident survey. Also, the bottom four scores here are the same bottom four scores from the resident survey. Sharing the top and bottom types of services indicate a shared understanding from city staff and residents of the greatest needs are.

Q. 3 - From your experience and understanding, please rank the top 5 types of services needed in your community



The above graph outlines a weighted score given to each response. A rank of 1, the highest community need, was assigned 5 points, while a rank of 5 was assigned 1 point. Homelessness prevention, food access, and mental health services rank as the top three needed services from the perspective of City staff. These needs are echoed from the resident survey, where homelessness prevention was the top need identified, while mental health service was number two, and food access was number five.

Q. 4 - Please identify any barriers you have experienced while attempting to obtain services in Auburn

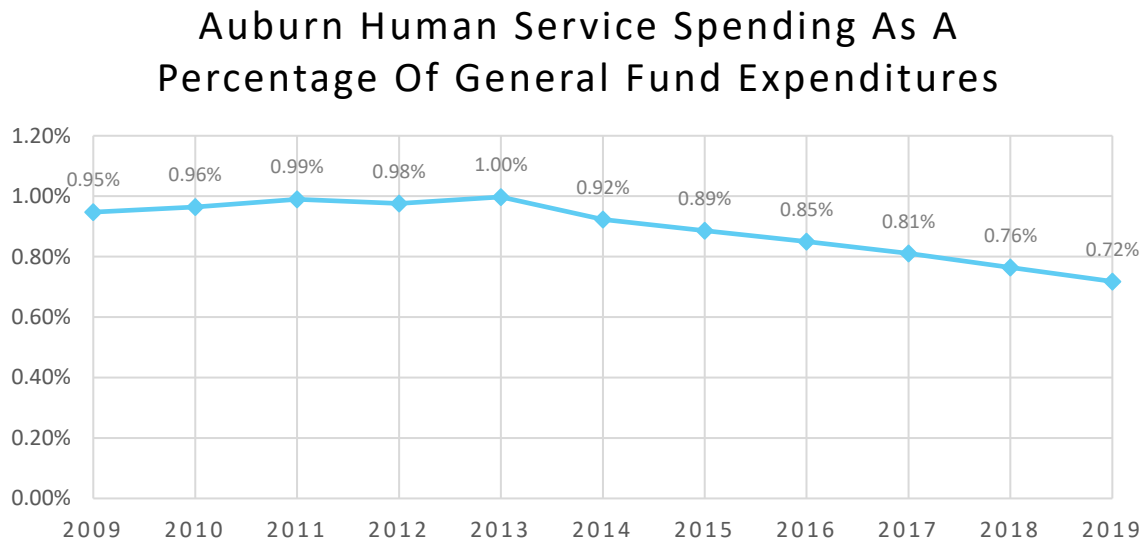


The City Staff survey respondents identified language, transportation, and knowledge of services available as the top three barriers they see when working with residents.

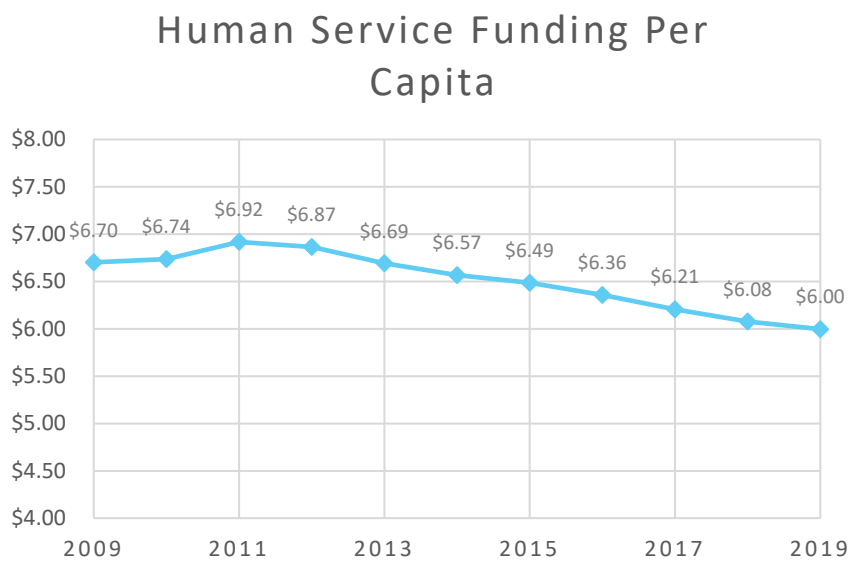
Funding Distribution Trend Analysis

Auburn is a member of the Human Service Funders Collaborative, a group of eighteen (18) cities that have formed a joint application process. Human service providers are able to submit one application to any of the participating cities, simplifying the administrative burden. Applications submitted to Auburn are reviewed by the Human Services Committee, a 9-member volunteer board appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The committee produces funding recommendations, presenting to the City Council in a scheduled Fall session. Final allocation amounts will be approved and adopted as part of the overall City budget. This process of funding occurs every two years.

The City of Auburn has historically aimed to fund Human Services at a rate of 1% of the total general fund. This funding has slowly crept below that 1% mark over the past decade. The amount made available to organizations through the Human Services application process has typically been near $560,000 each year; this includes approximately $490,000 from the General Fund, and approximately $70,000 from the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG funding for human service activities is capped at 15% of the entire CDBG allocation, Auburn makes every effort to reach this cap each year.



Funding human service programs as a percentage of the general fund is one strategy. However, this strategy is subject to economic fluctuations. In a "down" economy, often those low- and moderate-income households are in greater need, increasing demand of services. Tying human service funding to general fund expenditures in a "down" economy may leave the funding of critical services at a level that is not capable of meeting demand. The primary alternative to this method is a funding strategy that is based on the population and its growth. Per capita funding works to keep pace with growth, reducing strain on smaller organizations and non-profits as they see dramatic increases in demand for their services while not gaining access to resources at the same pace. Also, in recession years when the demand for human services increase, through a per capita funding strategy, resources to service agencies will not be impacted.

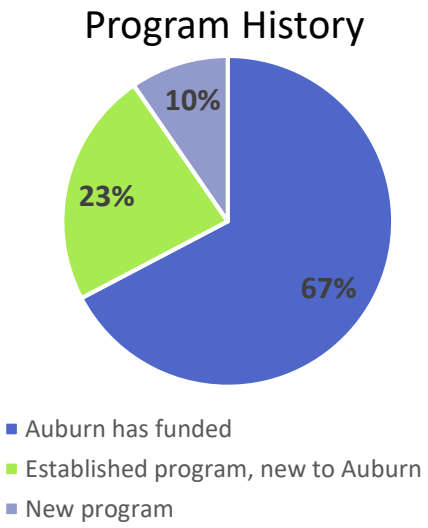


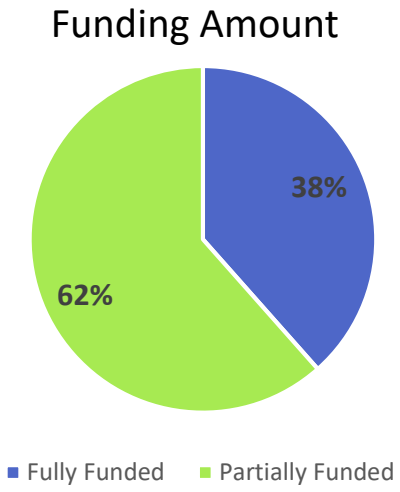
As of August 2019, the Auburn City Council is considering a move to per capita funding for Human Service programs.

Per Capita Funding Scenario

2019 Population	*81,720*
General Fund Expenditures	*$68,244,317*
Human Service Funding at $8.15/resident	*$666,018*
Human Service funding as % of General Fund	***0.98%***

In the 2019-2020 Human Services Collaboration application process there were 83 applications submitted from 63 different agencies, totaling a request of $1.4 million. Of those organizations funded by Auburn, there were 40 unique agencies, funding 52 unique projects.





The majority of programs funded in the 2019-2020 cycle are programs that Auburn is familiar with; about 30% of funded programs were new to Auburn. Of those programs that were funded, about 40% were funded at their requested level.

Total Requested Amount	***$873,113***
Recommendation	*$490,000*
Difference	***$383,113 (43%)***

Of programs receiving either partial or full funding, the total request was $873,113. Nearly all programs that received full funding have been funded in the past (85%).

Human Service Spending as a Ratio of General Fund Expenditures

Below is a comparison of 2017-18 human service spending as a part of general fund expenditures. Human service spending in this comparison is determined by the granted amount for the 2017-2018 Human Service Funders Collaborative. To normalize comparisons, no CDBG funds are included in the Human Service spending below because not all cities in King County received those funds. Those cities that *do* receive CDBG funds listed below are: Auburn, Federal Way, and Kent.

Human Service Spending as a Ratio of General Fund Expenditures (no CDBG funds)

City	**General Fund Expenditures**	**Human Service Spending**	**Human Service Ratio**
Auburn	$ 68,244,317	$ 437,300	0.64 %
Covington	$ 10,772,568	$ 136,500	1.27 %
Federal Way	$ 52,843,000	$ 585,840	1.11 %
Issaquah	$ 43,260,080	$ 371,500	0.86 %
Kent	$ 94,400,000	$ 1,044,500	1.11 %
SeaTac	$ 73,067,091	$ 495,209	0.68 %

As a ratio of total general fund expenditures, Covington contributes the largest portion of their City budget to human service projects at 1.27%, followed by Federal Way and Kent (both CDBG entitlement Cities) at 1.11%. Of those cities that receive CDBG funds, below is the breakout of Human Service spending as a ratio of general fund expenditures *including* the use of 15% of CDBG funds on human service projects.

Human Service Funding with CDBG Funds Included

City	**2017 CDBG Allocation**	**15% Human Service Spending Cap**	**Human Service Ratio WITH CDBG funds included**
Auburn	$ 428,078	$ 64,212	0.73 %
Federal Way	$ 674,568	$ 101,185	1.30 %
Kent	$ 1,054,657	$ 158,199	1.27 %

Auburn Funding Prioritization

As established in Resolution 5348, adopted by the Auburn City Council on February 5, 2018, the *Auburn Human Service Funding Priorities* are as follows:

1. Services that address basic and emergency needs, including food, shelter, health and dental care
2. Programs that prevent homelessness and support housing stability
3. Job training and educational programs that provide economic opportunity for Auburn residents
4. Programs that promote wellbeing and safety of individuals and families in the community
5. Programs that support positive relationship within families, neighborhoods, and communities

AND

- Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stability
  - Diversion
  - Rental Assistance
  - Shelter and Navigation Services
  - Domestic Violence Supports
- Food Access
  - Emergency Food
  - Meal Programs
  - Food Delivery
- Healthcare
  - Dental
  - Mental Health
  - Chemical Dependency
  - Senior Health Access

Based on the 2018 Resolution cited above, below is a breakout of the funded organizations in the 2019-2020 application cycle by type, as classified by the Human Services Committee:

Priority	Funded Orgs	Funding Amount	Percent of Budget
Homeless Prevention/Housing Stability	15	$161,027	33%
Basic and Emergency Needs	13	$140,475	29%
Wellbeing and Safety	4	$100,710	21%
Job Training and Education	4	$46,288	9%
Positive Relationships	7	$41,500	8%

A majority of those funds allocated through the human service competitive grant process are spent on *Homeless Prevention/Housing Stability* and *Basic and Emergency Needs*, a combined 62% of the human service budget. These two priorities reflect most of the need as outlined above in both the data portion and below in the focus groups/interviews. The budget recommendations outlined below are only in reference to those funds allocated through the human service competitive application cycle.

Qualitative Analysis

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with 14 stakeholder groups, including service providers, people accessing services, and professionals frequently interacting with people accessing services. Those consulted included a random sample. Randomization was done by using Microsoft Excel to assign a random number to each organization between 0.00000 and 1.00000, then rank those numbers from smallest to largest. The numbers nearest to zero (0.00000) were identified for consultations, resulting in interviews with the following groups: Auburn Public Library staff, Auburn Food Bank staff and consumers, NEXUS staff, NEXUS youth and young adult consumers, Bill Kirlin-Hackett of Interfaith TaskForce, Mother Africa staff, Ukrainian Community Center staff, Mobile Medical team, Mary's Place staff, Catholic Community Services staff, Sound Health staff, Lutheran Community Services staff and the Human Services Committee. A total of 33 people who are currently accessing services in the City of Auburn were interviewed.

Within each conversation, local strengths and gaps were highlighted and perspectives on priorities were shared. Several themes emerged, both positive and negative. Positive themes included examples of effective services that are currently available, including mobile medical services, access to food, a welcoming library, and the impact of word of mouth and peer sharing when it comes to obtaining resource information. Those strengths are elaborated upon in the next section. Broad concerns were consistent with other communities in the region, including the lack of affordable housing, mental health services, general medical services, emergency shelter, food access, and living wage employment, as well as many comments regarding unreliable public transportation and uncertainty about what resources are available locally. Below is a summary of those themes.

Affordable Housing: People struggle to pay rent in the Auburn area, both up-front costs to obtain housing as well as monthly rental costs. When asked what types of resources should be prioritized for funding in Auburn, people accessing services unanimously said housing assistance and more affordable housing, and service providers broadly agreed. There are long wait lists for subsidized housing resources, and units that are "affordable" require households to have income at a rate three times higher than rent, which makes many affordable units inaccessible, especially to those households in lower income brackets. People experiencing homelessness shared that up-front costs is sometimes all they need to obtain housing stability; covering a deposit, first month rent and move in costs would be sufficient to end their episode of homelessness. This speaks to the broad spectrum of housing resources needed in the community, from light touch, one-time assistance to intensive supportive housing interventions. The affordable housing crunch is felt throughout the region, as evidenced by the cost burden tables within the quantitative section of this assessment, and the spectrum of housing and supportive services interventions need to be significantly expanded.

Behavioral Health Services: Behavioral health providers cite access to treatment as a primary need in the region, second only to shelter/housing. Providers have access to funding for transportation to Seattle to access substance use treatment, which hasn't been ideal (outside their community) but has resulted in some success in connecting people to necessary resources. People without Medicaid insurance have no local options for treatment and are highlighted as a priority need. Although they've seen improved rates of coverage through the Affordable Care Act, 10% of people served by PATH outreach still have no coverage and cannot access services.

One provider highlighted a gap in use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) specifically across South King County providers, largely due to volunteer-run and faith-based nature of resources (not required to use HMIS). This results in an equal access issue, and this provider has seen a disproportionate number of people

experiencing homelessness in South King County lose housing opportunities through the regional Coordinated Entry for All system (CEA). CEA utilizes service transactions documented in HMIS to determine active and inactive status of people who have requested housing support. When HMIS is not used to log service transactions, it results in people losing housing referral opportunities through CEA.

Medical Services: Common themes regarding medical services included 1) Inappropriate discharges and follow up from hospitals, and 2) Lack of medical respite care facility. It is not uncommon for Auburn Food Bank to see people transported via taxi between hospitals and their programs, when there is a clear need for additional medical care that human service organizations cannot provide. A more intensive medical respite care facility does not exist locally (closest is Harborview in Seattle), so people exit the emergency room with nowhere to go, directly to the streets or emergency shelter and often end up at the public library during the day. This results in the Mobile Medical Team seeing people with worsening/acute medical conditions that would be preventable if a medical respite care option were available. The Mobile Medical Team identified the number one strategy for providing effective and sustainable treatment as a medical respite facility. Without that critical resource, patients, often without housing options, are discharged without safe place to recover and no medical follow up.

Emergency Shelter: During daytime hours, there are no day center locations with general services; there is no safe place to go within the human services system. As for nightly emergency shelter, Sundown shelter is available to single adults experiencing literal homelessness, and they use a lottery system due to being beyond their capacity of 30 beds nightly. NEXUS offers a residential program to youth under 18 and emergency shelter to young adults 18-24. Beyond these maxed out resources, people within the City of Auburn do not have access to shelter, safe places to park and reside in their vehicles, or safe campgrounds. Couples without children, families with children and single women do not have access to any shelter within the City of Auburn, and people with pets and those actively using substances have no options for shelter within the City of Auburn, as low barrier shelter does not exist.

Supportive services, including case management, navigation, housing location, and mainstream resources such as mental health services essentially do not exist within existing shelter programming. Ray of Hope is largely volunteer-run and focused on meeting basic needs, and NEXUS has experienced numerous cuts and a resulting need to significantly reduce services and focus on meeting basic needs. When people are able to get help with accessing services, they often cite Auburn Public Library staff as the source of that support.

Living Wage Employment: One culturally tailored service provider cited employment as "the hardest challenge." Another culturally tailored service provider wants to see "employment resources that work to build connections with agencies," as many immigrants and refugees face discrimination from employers. Many employment barriers exist when English skills are limited; while staff can attend job fairs with clients, they lack capacity to have repeated meetings/interviews with employers.

Young adults do not find existing employment resources to be helpful; specifically mentioning their ability to do resume writing without WorkSource assistance. Young adult providers would like to offer in-house employment services tailored to young adults but have experienced funding cuts that limit their ability to cover more than daily operations.

Public Transportation: People accessing services cited hardship when it comes to getting around in Auburn and the surrounding areas. Free and reduced fare bus tickets are not readily available except for NEXUS consumers and people engaged by outreach teams. Weekend, evening and mid-day service is especially limited; at night, after Sundown

Shelter fills its beds, it is extremely difficult to find transportation to regional shelter options. People often need to travel into Seattle to access services and obtaining bus passes for such travel is a burden.

Basic Needs: People accessing services, specifically single adults and young adults, cited a need for access to clothing and business attire. Single adults accessing Auburn Food Bank have struggled to access regular showers, storage for personal belongings, and regular access to laundry machines. Without the ability to meet these basic needs, the ability to gain employment and work toward goals are exponentially more difficult, given the stigma and public reaction to perceived hygiene issues and hauling personal belongings around town and into interviews. Several people talked about the exhaustion associated with hauling their belongings all day, leaving little energy and ability to accomplish much else.

Knowledge of Available Resources: People currently accessing services in Auburn commonly cited frustration when attempting to obtain information about available resources. Despite calling hotlines, utilizing resource books and talking with social service staff, much resource information is outdated, disorganized and/or completely unavailable when a person is experiencing a crisis. While the 211 hotline and resource books are "accessible," the information available is "not helpful" and that is largely due to a lack of navigation services to guide people through complex systems and requirements. Young adults believe increased outreach and advertising specific to local resources would be helpful in addressing the issue. The Auburn Public Library was repeatedly mentioned as a safe place to be during the day, with access to computer resources and helpful library staff. Overall, people accessing services, social service staff and the general public struggle to obtain information about resources immediately available and find it challenging to move through benefit and service systems with consistent success.

Strengths

People with connections in Auburn want to remain in the Auburn area, despite challenges they experience making ends meet. Several community strengths were mentioned in conversations with stakeholders, including people with lived experience. Strengths focused on effective services that are currently available, including mobile medical services, access to food, a welcoming library, and the impact of word of mouth and peer sharing when it comes to obtaining resource information.

Mobile Medical Services: Interviews resulted in positive feedback regarding the effectiveness and consistency of the Mobile Medical Van, with desire for increased frequency. It's particularly important for the service to be delivered consistently, and to be anchored to an existing community service. Independent foot traffic does not reach enough people. Successful partnerships include day centers and meal programs. Additionally, youth have been satisfied by the care provided by The Country Doctor.

Access to Food: People cited access to food as adequate, and the Auburn Food Bank stated having adequate resources except during the holidays. However, one service provider cited concerns with food banks providing expired food.

Welcoming Library: Folks cited the public library as a safe, welcoming place to go during the day, and library staff identify this service as being part of their mission. The Auburn library has experienced steady increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness they are seeing during the day, increased need for support identifying resources, and frequent need to handle complex situations including mental health crises, which library staff haven't traditionally been trained to handle.

Word of Mouth and Peer Sharing: When it comes to obtaining resource information in the Auburn area, word of mouth is what people rely on. This is a common method of resource information sharing in most communities, but partly due to lack of a centralized location (mobile, physical, etc.) in Auburn to get such information. People are relying on each other to share what they know. One clear benefit of focus groups associated with this Needs Assessment was the peer sharing that occurred during the facilitated sessions; perhaps there is opportunity for continued peer sharing sessions in the short term.

Outreach Partnership with Police Department: Catholic Community Services (CCS) partners with the Auburn Police Department to deliver outreach to unsheltered people experiencing mental health and/or substance use issues and has seen success in this balanced approach. CCS offers a supportive service approach, paired with Auburn Police Department for law enforcement when necessary. Connection to services has been successful, including housing, shelter, food, and healthcare resources. Service providers highlight a preference for a Mental Health Professional to be hired within Auburn Police Department but have established successful partnerships in lieu of this resource.

Recommendations

Based on the most urgent needs highlighted by people accessing services as well as service providers, the authors of this assessment put forward the following recommendations:

1. **Increase the overall budget for Human Service programs.**
   Given the analysis above comparing neighboring cities sharing broad similarities to Auburn, it is recommended that the City of Auburn dedicate no less than 1% of General Fund expenditures to Human Services. This recommended amount excludes CDBG funding. It is recommended that upon reaching a minimum of 1% of General Fund expenditures allocated to human services, that the City adjust annually to keep pace with population growth. Nearby cities that are CDBG entitlement grantees dedicate just over 1.1% of general fund expenditures to human services, that percentage goes up to just over 1.25% when including CDBG funding.

   Auburn and South King County have grown tremendously, driving up the cost of living. This upward trend in costs has put a great deal of pressure on those low- and moderate-income families. As pressure from Seattle continues to push households to the suburbs, this trend is not expected to lessen in the coming years. To meet this challenge, additional funding to the Human Services budget is strongly recommended.

   As the data, surveys, and focus groups above indicate, the needs in the City and the region have increased in all areas over the past five years. Most notably, the cost of housing has had a great impact on the families in Auburn. This is evidenced by data, the number of cost burdened households earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) has increased by 21% since 2010. This increase in housing costs should be met with increased resource to assist those households that are most vulnerable to these market trends.

2. **Prioritize and expand shelter and housing options aligning with the Housing First philosophy**. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), "Housing First is a proven approach, applicable across all elements of systems for ending homelessness, in which people experiencing homelessness are connected to permanent housing swiftly and with few to no treatment preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or other barriers. It is based on overwhelming evidence that people experiencing homelessness can achieve stability in permanent housing if provided with the appropriate level of services. Study after study has shown that Housing First yields higher housing retention rates, drives significant reductions in the use of costly crisis services and institutions, and helps people achieve better health and social outcomes." When analyzing trends in communities who have moved the needle on homelessness and sustained the gains, alignment with Housing First is a clear, common thread. Alignment with Housing First includes and is not limited to the following examples:
   a) Access to emergency shelter and housing programs is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
   b) Emergency shelter and housing programs accommodate couples as well as pets. This goes beyond the legal requirement of accepting service animals and acknowledges a household's "family" as they define "family." It is common for couples and people with pets to remain unsheltered as opposed to leaving a partner or pet to enter emergency shelter.

c) Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives. Many people live with substance use issues and remain successfully housed without entering the homeless system, demonstrating it is possible to remain housed despite substance use challenges. Aligning with the harm reduction philosophy, tenants are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.

d) Staff in shelter are trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client/tenant engagement, such as motivational interviewing, assertive engagement, critical time interventions, and trauma-informed care.

e) Services focus primarily on rapid connection to permanent housing resources, utilizing a Housing Problem Solving approach, and consistent and intentional connections to Coordinated Entry for All (CEA).

3. **Expand supportive housing options utilizing evidence-based housing models.**

   a. **Housing Problem Solving**, specifically "diversion" and "rapid exit from shelter" approaches. Housing Problem Solving is an approach embedded within the homeless system focused on helping households utilize their strengths, support networks, and community resources to find housing. It should be attempted with everyone interacting with the homeless system, by staff highly trained in conflict resolution and mediation, and include flexible financial assistance when such assistance will make the difference between housing stability and entering or continuing to access the homeless system. Consider cross training staff from multiple systems for maximum impact, including emergency shelter and day center staff, public library staff, and mobile medical staff.

   b. **Rental assistance with supportive services** utilizing the Progressive Engagement model. Progressive Engagement means providing only the amount of assistance that's necessary to support a household in stabilizing. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, most households require only a small amount of assistance to stabilize. For those who need more assistance, that should be provided. This is an individualized, highly flexible approach that maximizes resources by providing only the assistance that is necessary to support housing stability. Research supports an inability to predict the level of assistance a household will need to stabilize, even by looking at specific data around income, employment, substance use, etc. Therefore, supportive service staff must work closely with people to understand exactly what is needed to permanently end their episode of homelessness. It is important to utilize real time data to analyze displacement and equity-related implications of all housing interventions. Because data indicates displacement and equity issues within larger King County rental assistance efforts, emphasis is placed here for City of Auburn officials and partners.

   c. **Permanent Supportive Housing** targeted to people experiencing homelessness with long term rental subsidy and intensive service needs. This is a longer-term approach requiring a substantial planning effort, and supplemental to rental assistance programming that can serve as more of a short-term plan to make additional resources available to people immediately.

4. **Ensure strong housing location services are available**. The local and regional housing market makes identifying a market rate rental and negotiating with landlords incredibly challenging. Housing location services should be available through existing housing programs to people receiving housing assistance to ensure a viable housing option is identified, and as needed, supports provided to landlords who are willing to negotiate reductions to their screening criteria when people have housing barriers such as an eviction or criminal history.

5. **Additional affordable housing**. As a participating member of the recently formed South King Housing and Homeless Partners, we recommend the City of Auburn continue to analyze its use of zoning policies and regional approaches to affordable housing. As the suburban areas of South King County continue to receive families and households pushed outwards from the Greater Seattle Area due to increased housing costs, Auburn will also see a rise in housing costs due to increased demand. This regional approach to affordable housing for South King County is an excellent start and will need several early victories to create buy-in to the notion that affordable housing is a solvable issue when looked at from a regional perspective with an equity lens.
    a. Formally, through the South King Housing and Homelessness Partners (SKHHP) this suggested regional approach has the opportunity move forward with a significant amount of funds. Auburn representation within SKHHP should strongly advocate for the pooling of HB1406 funds among the SKHHP membership. As recommended by the SKHHP Staff Working Group, the pooling of funds has the potential to increase the outflow from the fund significantly. To this point, affordable housing is a regional concern, and the regional approach should supply itself with adequate funding to secure an early and visible "win" to increase general trust among members and as a marketing tool for other communities interested in joining SKHHP.

6. **Expand access to basic needs services**, including laundry, showers and storage for personal belongings. Hours of access to laundry and showers must be available beyond traditional business hours and include weekends to accommodate employment and school schedules. Storage facilities that are accessible 24/7 are ideal given varying schedules. Incorporating a "resource navigator" role within these services may help to address both basic needs and the lack of resource navigation support cited by people accessing services.

7. **Access to resource information and navigation support,** resulting in meaningful connections to resources. Approaches to consider include peer outreach and information sharing (hiring people with lived experience to support folks through complex systems and resource connection), and as recommended on page 46, facilitating regional collaboration and peer learning among service providers aiming to increase knowledge of available services and benefits among frontline staff so they may effectively offer system navigation to people in crisis. A local direct service model to consider is "The Connection Desk" in Tukwila and Seatac. As one volunteer describes The Connection Desk, people seeking support *"…enter the door and are immediately greeted by warm faces. Those faces are intentionally there to make you feel welcomed and supported. First, you'll enter brief information about yourself and the type of services or resources you need. Then a program coordinator will patiently walk you through the necessary steps for registration for the Affordable Health Care, utility assistance, housing, resume building and much more." The volunteer said, "by listening, we had the chance to learn about each other and hear each other's stories. In the end, it was more than just resources. We began to have an honest human connection, valuing and validating the social experience."*

8. **Develop safe parking options for people living in their vehicles** due to lack of housing and emergency shelter options. Vehicle residency represented the largest increase in the 2019 Point in Time Count across King County, and within that increase, the region with the largest increase was South King County. Yet, there are no safe parking options within the City of Auburn. All Home, King County, City of Seattle and partners are working with HUD Unsheltered Initiative technical assistance providers from Cloudburst to identify priority action items and it is recommended the City of Auburn adopt recommendations provided through the Unsheltered Initiative process in late 2019 and early 2020.

9. **Funding Prioritization List –** Adopt a formal list of Human Service Funding priorities that are clear and may be tied to outcomes to facilitate clear communication with Auburn residents. Given the data analysis, survey results, and conversations with service providers and local programs, our recommended of priorities would be:
    i. Housing and Associated Services
    ii. Homelessness Interventions
    iii. Housing Related Supportive Services (including homelessness prevention and housing related basic needs)
    iv. Basic Needs (food, medical/dental care)
    v. Job Training and Education

    All types of programs funded in the past would reasonably fit under the proposed priorities above. For example, domestic violence programs could fit under priority 1, 2, or 3. Childcare, given the circumstance could fit under priority 3, 4, or 5.

    Create a crosswalk document for applicants clearly indicating the priorities and what types of programs may fit under which priority. Applicants should identify which priority their program or service satisfies, and clearly outline the metrics for those services and/or programs such as: people served; beds/night provided, meals delivered, etc.

    Create a vision/mission statement that justifies these priorities in a way that conveys to the public that priorities are understood and reflect the needs/desires of residents.

10. **Messaging and strategic communication –** Resident comments in the survey (both within the survey and on Facebook where the survey was disseminated) indicated that there are some sentiments that exist within the community that have extremely negative perceptions of their neighbors struggling with homelessness. Especially as residents see and experience increases in diversity and their perception is that homelessness is more visible, clear and accurate messaging with residents is critical.
    a. Clearly outline to the public what the human service priorities are, the amount of funding going to each priority in the most recent funding cycle, visualizing outcomes from funded organizations.

Budget Allocation Recommendations

The following are recommendations for prioritizing resources to maximize the local impact. Assuming 1% of the general fund expenditures in 2019 ($682,443) and including maximum cap of CDBG ($89,361), the total budget for recommendations below is $771,804.

75% of funding towards homelessness intervention and housing stability - $578,853

When asked how they would prioritize City of Auburn Human Service funding, 100% of community members in interviews and focus groups prioritized "housing" as the primary need. Based on local cost and outcome data, it is recommended that the City of Auburn dedicate at least 75% of the total budget to housing resources.

Of this 75%:

- *Housing and Associated Services*
  - 38% to rental assistance with supportive service programming, supporting an estimated 15 households at an average cost per household of $14,407 in King County.
- *Homelessness Interventions*
  - 38% to housing problem solving interventions (diversion and rapid exit from shelter). The estimated average cost per household for these services in King County is $1,668. Given this, assisting 131 households would cost an estimated $220,176.
- *Housing Related Supportive Services (including housing related basic needs)*
  - 24% to access housing related basic needs services, including storage, laundry, and showers. Storage was noted as a top priority among these services; a partnership with faith-based organizations may meet laundry and shower needs at a lower cost, and perhaps accommodate safe parking needs.

25% of funding towards meeting basic needs and job training - $192,951

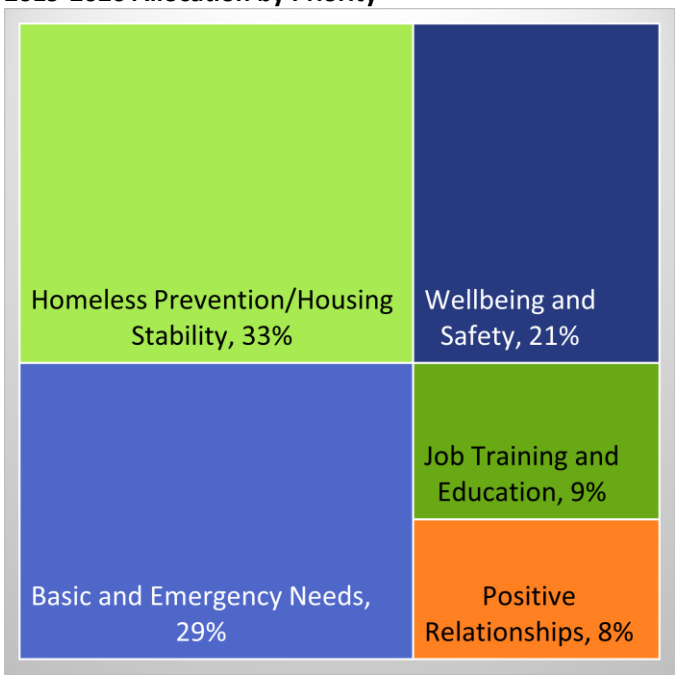
Of this 25%

- *Basic Needs (food, medical/dental care)*
  - 65% ($125,418) would go towards those services provided offering basic and emergency needs outside of housing related services. Such as childcare resources, community health services, meal delivery, etc.
- *Job Training & Education*
  - 35% ($67,533) would go to job training and education services with the aim at increasing economic opportunities for those served.

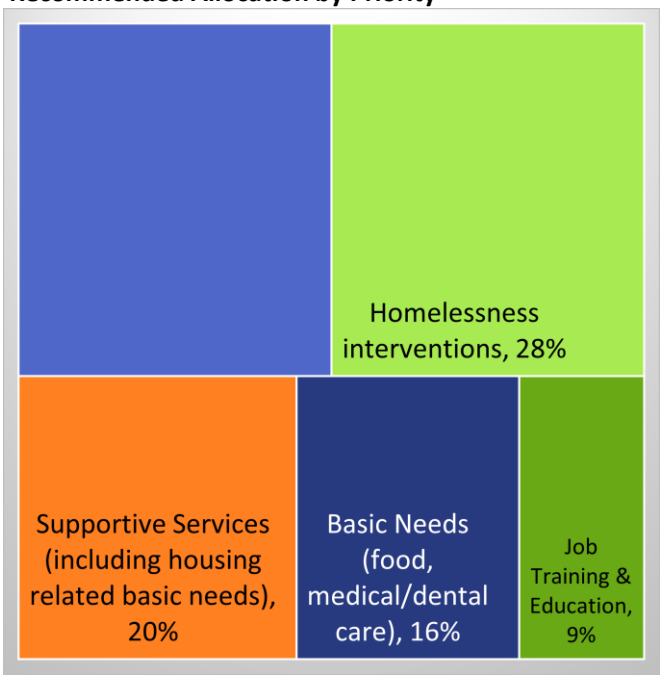
The priorities funded in the past do not differ greatly from the recommendations outlined above. Given the need identified in focus groups, interviews, and throughout the data, it is recommended that a greater amount of funding be allocated towards housing specific needs. In the 2019-2020 cycle, approximately 45% of funding went towards organizations related in some way to housing services. It is recommended that that proportion be increased to 75%. In conjunction with this, it is also recommended to clearly identify and delineate between priorities, creating space for more streamlined outcome measurement and data standards.

The graphic below outlines the funded organizations by priority in the 2019-2020 cycle and compares that to the recommendation of funding by priority.

2019-2020 Allocation by Priority



Recommended Allocation by Priority



The following are additional recommendations for prioritizing existing staff time and resources to maximize the local impact:

- Create opportunities for collaboration and peer learning among service providers, as increased knowledge of available services and benefits increases the ability of frontline staff to offer system navigation to people in crisis. This should include facilitation of regularly scheduled meetings focused on resource sharing and identification of tools needed to support system navigation. A regional approach is recommended, in partnership with at least the communities of Auburn, Kent and Burien, which facilitates stronger collaboration between service providers of each city as well as Human Service staff and leadership.
- Lead focused effort to increase service provider participation in HMIS, especially among faith based and volunteer-run programming, to ensure equal access to housing resources through regional Coordinated Entry for All system as well as to contribute to local and regional data that will assist with future planning.
- Create clear and concise communication with residents around human service priorities. Develop dialog with residents around outcomes of human service funding and progress towards goals.

The following is a short description of how Spokane, Washington approaches providing human services to their residents.

In attempts to provide recommendations to Auburn on human service funding priorities as well as broader recommendations, an interview was conducted with a Homeless Program Specialist from Spokane to identify places where overlaps and differences exist. This was not included in the recommendations above because the infrastructure and processes comparing Auburn to Spokane are widely different and any specific recommendations based on

Spokane's system would require long-term concentrated efforts and large amounts of resources. The system outlined below are ideas to consider.

Funding Cycle

- Spokane has shifted to a 5-year funding window for its human service providers. Acknowledging that this is a more extensive process at the outset while they are rewarded with a more static and high-quality collection of funded organizations.
- Realizing many of the same organizations were being funded from year-to-year, Spokane had a largely stable portfolio of organizations applying and being funded, making them more comfortable with the administrative and reporting capacity of many of the organizations applying for funds. Moving from a 2-year cycle to a 5-year cycle has freed up City resources and administrative capacity.
- Creative projects that may not have the administrative or reporting infrastructure at the outset may be funded using local dollars and not federal or state dollars. With a 5-year funding window, staff are able to work with these organizations to get their performance up to the system a whole in the least.

Contracting

- All 5-year awards are performance-based contracts with clearly defined, mutually agreed upon outcome measurements. Outcome measurements are often tied back to HUD or the Washington State Department of Commerce. This raises the data quality to a level that would allow a wider pool of funding for the organization to be eligible for. City staff is utilized for technical assistance (TA) throughout the program year, offering assistance where able to the funded service organizations. This is largely possible as cited by Spokane, due to the shift to a 5-year funding window. Freeing up staff from a large and frequent application process, it has allowed staff to act in a different more deeply involved role.

Performance Standards

- The City has minimum performance standards and holds each contract accountable to those. Spokane does not take a punitive approach, rather for those underperforming organizations, the City provides technical assistance to get them up to meet the standards at a minimum. The City makes every attempt to provide funded organizations with the tools to accurately record outcomes.