Program 101
by Alyssa Weed, President, League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County

What is Program?

The study of government issues is one of the basic functions of the League of Women Voters. Study is undertaken at all three levels—national, state, and local—and leads to both education and advocacy, two of the basic missions of the organization.

The League’s process for study has acquired a solid reputation for its in-depth and unbiased exploration of an issue, which is then submitted to its grassroots membership for informed discussion. Consensus or concurrence of the members on various aspects of this issue results in a League program position. Such a position becomes the foundation for League advocacy and action.

In short, Program is what gives us the ability to write letters, lobby representatives, endorse ballot measures, protest, draft legislation, testify before governing bodies, and function as a political organization.

I care about action … not studies!

This study process is designed to produce a credible, unbiased product, and at the same time, maximize member input and involvement. A local study is within the capabilities of a League of any size: large Leagues have the people power to take on large, complicated issues, and Leagues with fewer resources undertake more limited studies. But regardless of circumstances, local Leagues should plan to periodically conduct a local issue study.

The study process has enormous potential to increase membership, visibility, and support while performing an important, if not unique, service for the community. The League cannot engage on issues we don’t have positions on. This means no marching, no protesting, no testifying before governing bodies, no ballot endorsements, no direct lobbying of elected officials, no community advocacy work, no writing letters, and no educating voters.

So, if you care about action—you need to care about studies.

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All LWV action and advocacy efforts start with an effective Program that thoughtfully examines all sides of important issues facing the community.
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MISSION STATEMENT
The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, a nonpartisan political
organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works
to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy
through education and advocacy.

To become a sponsor or to individually support the health of the League, please consider making a donation.
Connecting with LWV Leadership

A Message from the Board Regarding COVID-19

As the world is learning more about the coronavirus (COVID-19), we at the League of Women Voters Seattle-King County want to ensure everyone’s safety. Therefore, we have cancelled all League-related events and activities until further notice.

State and local health officials, in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), shared updated recommendations aimed at limiting the public’s exposure to the virus. In alignment with their recommendations, and along with stopping the in-person forums, units and committee meetings, we have closed the day-to-day operation of the office site, but we remain in operation online.

You can still call and email with questions and concerns, and we will be available to respond. Need physical items from the office? Let us know and we will come up with a creative solution.

The Census is a critical issue for the US but is now completely overshadowed in the news. Have you received your Census form in the mail? Have you read up on the Census? You can find lots of info in the resources on our website.

We are doing our best to keep everyone safe, healthy and informed.

It now looks like we will need to limit our in-person activities for an extended period of time. We are looking at alternative ways to share communications and hold meetings. If you have ideas, thoughts, preferences on how to get information, please let us know. We will continue to update you with emails, Facebook posts and the website for the latest news.

We on the board adore all of you and cannot wait to get back to defending democracy alongside you. Please stay in touch during this global health crisis.

Questions, comments, or feedback? Call 206-329-4848 or email us at info@seattlelwv.org.

STAY HEALTHY, STAY STRONG, STAY INFORMED!

As the League does its part to help slow the spread of COVID-19, this issue of The Voter will be distributed in digital format only—all print production and mailing of the newsletter is temporarily suspended. This is an interactive PDF, meaning you can click on hyperlinks (in bold blue font) and page numbers to navigate the document. The 🖇️ symbol at the bottom of each page will take you to the top of the newsletter.
**Program 101, continued from p. 1**

**So how do we get there?**

League positions are based on study and represent substantial agreement among our members. Reaching member agreement on what will become League advocacy positions is the goal of League study and is required before action can be taken.

**What is consensus?**

Consensus and concurrence are the two decision-making processes the League uses to reach member agreement. Whichever method is used, it must respect the League’s grassroots structure, nonpartisanship, and the distinction between education and advocacy.

*Consensus:* agreement among a substantial number of members, representative of the membership as a whole, reached after sustained study and group discussions.

Consensus is a sense of what the group supports, not a vote. It is not a simple majority, nor it is necessarily unanimity. While voting naturally polarizes people unless the vote is unanimous, consensus is a unifying process. It is most appropriate to use consensus when a study item is complex, complicated, or controversial.

**What is concurrence?**

Concurrence is the act of agreeing with or concurring with, a position reached by another League, or study committee, task force, or board. Concurrence is achieved by member agreement with another statement.

It can be based on individual opinion, whereas consensus is based on group opinion. Consensus is interactive; concurrence is not. Concurrence is appropriate when members want to reaffirm support for an existing position following an update on the issue, only a small change is needed to extend a current position, a current position needs clarification that is more than an editorial change, or a League wishes to adopt a position already held by another League.

**What does the entire program process look like? The Ten Steps for Study to Action:**

1. **Program Planning and Adoption** — be sure there is clear member support for adoption of the study item
2. **Consensus and Concurrence** — have the board approve an appropriate member agreement process
3. **The Study Committee** — open the study process to all members
4. **Writing the Consensus Question** — develop good consensus questions or concurrence statements
5. **The Facts and Issues Publication** — inform members about the study issues
6. **Prepare for Consensus** — inform members about the process for reaching member agreement and provide opportunities to participate
7. **The Consensus Meeting** — create an atmosphere of trust
8. **Determining Consensus** — the board will carefully evaluate whether agreement has been reached
9. **Documenting Consensus After Consensus is Approved** — maintain records adequate to ensure that future members understand the agreement that was reached
10. **Taking Action** — act to bring about governmental change

**Forums and Events 101**

Forums are free, open to the public, and serve to educate members and the community at large about specific issues the League is suited to address. Traditionally, they are part of the process of study to action, but in lieu of any active studies, they can be treated as standalone educational or advocacy events.

*continued on next page*
Forum FAQs

Who is in charge of Forums?

Issue and study committees should be leading the charge. For example, if there is a forum on public banking, the Public Banking Committee is responsible for finding speakers, preparing presentations, writing content for The Voter, soliciting volunteers, and arranging printed materials with the League office. The LWVSKC office administrator can assist with printed materials, promotional emails and social media posts, as well as communicating with the venue and bringing refreshments.

What does the Program Chair do?

The Program Chair is responsible for making sure the hosting committee accomplishes all of their tasks, assists with event prep as needed, acts as a liaison between the hosting committee and the Board, and walks the hosting committee through the process. They are not expected to take the lead on securing speakers, picking topics, or planning the event but may assist if they so choose.

When and where are forums?

The Program Schedule is adopted at the Annual Meeting, but it is within the purview of the Program Chair and hosting committees to change the date, time, and location at their discretion. Changes to the schedule should be communicated as soon as possible and as far in advance as possible.

Forums are typically held at Seattle First Baptist but can occur anywhere in the county. The hosting committee is in charge of identifying and securing a venue, though the Program Chair may assist them in this should they need it.

Alternative venues should have good access to public transportation or easy parking and have adequate tech/AV support if necessary. As a general rule, all of our events are to be ADA accessible. If you’re not sure about accessibility, ask your venue point of contact for all of the information. Members typically expect light refreshments at forums; make sure you inquire with the venue about what the options are for this, and coordinate with the LWVSKC Office Administrator on next steps.

Are all League events forums?

Not all events are considered forums. League members are encouraged to host events throughout the year that are not tied to the Program Schedule. Traditionally, a forum asks for member follow up in order to build consensus or concurrence. Some events like film screenings, panel discussions, think and drinks, etc. do not require any member follow-up. Units and committees (including the Program Committee) can and should host smaller, more casual events that are focused on hot button issues, issues specific to their communities, or are entirely social in nature.
So can I just organize an event and put a League logo on it?

No! If you or any other interested member is interested in throwing an event in the name of the League, they must fill out our “Event Request Form” and turn it into the Program Chair. The Program Chair then will vet the request with the Board and determine whether or not this is a suitable League activity.

Can outside organizations sponsor our events?

Absolutely! We've partnered with a variety of organizations and always welcome the support. Our requirements for sponsorship are that the organizations are non-partisan, reflect the core values of the League, and do not in any way diminish the League's reputation. To coordinate specific sponsorship requests, contact the Fundraising/Development Chair for help.

How do I get people to attend Forums or Events?

Publication in The Voter is a critical part of League internal communications. Submitting information about your event early and often will ensure that it reaches engaged members. Many members also find out about events via Facebook and email, so coordinate with the Communications Committee and the Office Administrator to ensure your event has an accurate and compelling Facebook event page and that there is an email alert about your event. It should also be posted to the website.

Picking an appropriate venue, time, and day is also key in ensuring participation. Ideal venues are conveniently located for the target audience (e.g., you wouldn't host an event about Issaquah issues in Seattle), have good access to public transportation or easy parking, and have adequate tech/AV support if necessary. As a general rule, all of our events are to be ADA accessible. If you're not sure about accessibility, ask your venue point of contact!

Inviting local elected officials and their staff, other community leaders, and organizations that share our goals are also a great way to boost attendance.

How am I supposed to pay for all of this?

We have a designated Program Budget that Forum and event organizers can inquire about. Typically, venues cost between $300 and $500. Coordinate with the LWVSKC Office Administrator and the appropriate Treasurer for budget guidance. Forums and other large, public events have priority for financial assistance. Smaller event organizers are encouraged to locate free venues (libraries, community centers, private residences) or host their events at public places like bars, restaurants, or cafes.
### Recommended Forum Timeline

The purpose of this timeline is to outline what should go into the planning and execution of a forum. Some events will take less steps, and some will require more hands-on monitoring. The Program Chair is not expected to complete all of these tasks; rather, they are to oversee the hosting committee in the execution of these tasks.

#### Three Months Before…
- Publish event/forum information in *The Voter*
- Connect with the Communications Committee to let them know about the upcoming event so they can create a publicity plan
- Reach out to local elected officials and community groups to invite them
- Make sure venue is secured

#### One Month Before…
- Contact TVW, the Seattle Channel, or KCTV to see if they are able to record
- Solicit any necessary volunteers
- Follow up with Communications Committee about publicity, make sure the Facebook event is up, the event is on the website, and coordinate any email blasts
- Make sure speakers/presenters are secured if necessary

#### Three Weeks Before...
- Make sure all materials (article, event info, unit questions) have been submitted to The Voter editor
- Touch base with the venue about any tech/AV needs

#### Two Weeks Before...
- Double-confirm speakers and presenters
- Reach out to elected officials, special guests, community groups to remind them about the upcoming event

#### The Week Leading Up to your Forum…
- Conduct a site visit at the venue if it is a new location for the League
- Double-clarify any tech/AV needs
- Touch base with anyone coming to film and see what their needs will be
- Email speakers/presenters with event details (parking instructions, directions, time they need to be there, tech needs, accessibility information etc.)
- Email volunteers with event details
- Send anything that will need to be printed to the LWVSKC Office Administrator
- Make a plan for refreshments with the LWVSKC Office Administrator
- Make sure the Communications Committee posts about the event on Facebook

#### The Day of the Forum...
- Show up at least 90 minutes before your event is scheduled to start; check in with venue for any updates
- Do a test run of any tech/AV
- Locate the bathrooms and accessible entrances so you can direct attendees
- Ensure you have all the proper signage so attendees can find you
- Make sure the Communications Committee posts about the event on Facebook

#### After the Forum...
- Submit any pictures or recordings to the Communications Committee and the Office Administrator
- If the event was recorded by local TV, check the availability of the recording and send it to the Communications Committee and Office Administrator when it’s available
- If your forum was part of a study process, follow up with units for answers to the discussion questions in *The Voter* and report back to your study committee.
Census 2020: A Brief History
by Cathy O'Shea, Treasurer

I was reading the book “The Naked Consumer” by Erik Larson, one of my favorite writers. (Though this is not one of his better books!) Lo and behold, I found a great summary of the history of the Census. While the collection of data can be dry, the history of the census is not. Here’s a quick summary of the juicier bits of what he wrote.

1017 BC: God orders King David not to count the people of Israel. David held a census anyway and counted 1.57 million men. He wanted to know how large of an army he could raise. Considered a “cause and effect,” a pestilence was unleashed and killed 70,000 men. This is a big deal in biblical circles, so I won’t go into it—this is way out of my area of expertise. Check out Exodus 30:12–16. Word spread that Satan had caused David’s abysmal behavior.

Staying on the biblical note, by 0 B.C., women were likely counted as well since a pregnant Mary was dragged to Joseph’s hometown of Bethlehem to deliver her first-born. Fact and legend mix here as well.

As late as 1753, a critic of a proposed English census worried that the count would bring “public misfortune or epidemical distemper.” Understanding this fear of census, our Founding Fathers still wrote the census into the U.S. Constitution—the Constitution, not some agency or congressional document—so that the government would count its population every decade, beginning in 1790.

In 1790, the census counted 3.9 million people and asked six questions. It cost $44,000, with 650 enumerators. Thomas Jefferson was the Census Bureau Director. There were 45 people per square mile.

Over the next 50 years, the census was used to address pressing needs, such as whether the U.S. had enough manpower to defend itself. More and more questions were added. By 1860, citizens were asked to divulge the value of their personal estates. To destroy the Confederate economy, Sherman’s March used Census data to identify what and where to hit. Ouch!

In 1870, there were 156 questions. By 1880, they got downright snoopy, poking around for answers to 13,010 questions, on 215 forms, mostly to businesses (remember all responses are hand-counted at this time). By 1880, they collected so much information that the census could not publish it all.

By 1890, there were 63 million people; the census asked 30 questions. It cost $11.5 million and used 46,408 enumerators. The population had increased 25% in the past decade.

Then comes Herman Hollerith. Hollerith dated Colonel Billings’ daughter; Billings was running the census office vital-statistics division. At a Sunday dinner at the Billings home, the Colonel was remembered to have said “there ought to be a machine.” Hollerith did not marry Miss Billings, but he did invent the punch card, the beginning of the computer punch card. While good for the census, this also helped Hollerith start IBM.

Marketers discovered the wealth of census data early on. With computers they had even more data to explore and analyze. Whole companies and fortunes have been built creating and using the data. It’s legal, some of it is overkill, and with the Internet, we’ve probably shared more information about ourselves directly than the census ever will.

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On December 7, 1941, Japan invaded Pearl Harbor. Under the Second War Powers Act of 1942, which suspended the confidentiality protections for census data, the bureau could have turned over the specific names and addresses of Japanese residents. They didn’t.

However, in 1942, using the 1940 census, the Census bureau worked with the Western War Command. They laid out the various city blocks where Japanese lived and reported how many Japanese lived in those blocks in California, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho and Arkansas. No personal information was divulged. The revelations prompted Kenneth Prewitt, then director of the U.S. Census Bureau, to issue a public apology. Prewitt wrote: “The historical record is clear that senior Census Bureau staff proactively cooperated with the internment, and that census tabulations were directly implicated in the denial of civil rights to citizens of the United States who happened also to be of Japanese ancestry.”

The Second War Powers Act was repealed after World War II, while further legal protections for personal data were added and strengthened through legislation passed in the 1950’s and the 1970’s.

In 1990, the census was managed by the only woman director in its history, Barbara Everitt Bryant. That year the census counted 248.7 million people. It cost $2.5 billion, with 13 questions on the short form and 58 on the long form.

Starting in 1970, there was a short-form and a long-form questionnaire. The long-form questionnaire included a question about citizenship. Starting in 2005, the American Community Survey replaced the long-form and does include the citizenship questions. This is done annually to a small number of households. In 2020, we made our own history by refusing to allow the citizenship question on the short-form survey. The census question was first introduced in 1820 and appeared for the last time in 1950.

Be sure to respond to the census. You can keep up to date on response rates on the U.S. Census website. To read more facts about Census history, visit this web page. To find out more about Erik Larsen’s book, The Naked Consumer, visit his website; the source material for this article is on pages 32 to 57.

Join the League of Women Voters Board of Directors and Make a Difference!

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County is seeking volunteers (women and men) to join its Board of Directors. If you value civil discourse and full participation in all levels of government, if you care about engaging voters, and if you want to help strengthen laws that govern voting rights, the League might just be the place for you! Send an email to info@seattlelwv.org for more information, and help lead the League into its next century!
UNITS AROUND THE SOUND

On Saturday, February 29, the North King County Unit of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County showed up in force at Third Place Commons in Lake Forest Park to send postcards to infrequent voters. The group managed to mail more than 1,000 postcards! Thank you to these intrepid defenders of democracy for all their hard work.

Board Brief: March 7, 2020 LWVSKC Board Meeting
submitted by Janice Camp, Secretary

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County and Education Fund Boards met at the LWVSKC offices on Saturday, March 7, 2020. The Board heard a presentation on “Speak-up Schools” as a strategy to prepare LWV members and others to participate in redistricting forums—more to follow on this engagement opportunity.

Cathy O’Shea presented the treasurer’s report; revenue is down with a projected shortfall of $50,000 against budget in the Educational Fund. The Board is pursuing a strategic planning activity to address revenue and volunteer engagement over the next three to five years. The Board leadership will undertake a required performance evaluation of LWVSKC staff this spring. Planning has begun for the annual meeting, which will be held in May. The agenda for the Annual meeting will include finalizing the 2020-2021 Program, reviewing and approving the budget, voting on new Board members, and presenting awards.

With regard to Programming, due to the COVID-19 concerns, the in-person March forum on the census will not be held; the Board is pursuing a live-streaming or other distance learning option. The April Forum on Public Banking is tentative while the Board awaits more direction from the King-County Department of Health about large gatherings. The homelessness study and discussion questions have been drafted and will be sent to the Units for review, comment, and response to questions.
In this book, best-selling author Michael Lewis tells us there are five risks we MUST avoid. The first is making sure we don’t have “broken arrows,” meaning nuclear weapons that might get lost or damaged. The next three are North Korean missiles reaching the U.S., “maintaining the agreement that prevents Iran from building nuclear bombs,” and protecting the electric grid from cyber-terrorism.

The fifth risk is the most important. It is “the risk that society runs when it falls into the habit of responding to long-term risks with short-term solutions.” That risk is whatever “you never thought would be a real risk, and thereby you never learned what might have saved you.”

Lewis describes the well-prepared Bush and Obama transition teams that were eager to help the incoming president’s team get settled. A great deal of seemingly new or surprising information needed to be explained to the newcomers. For example, in the Department of Energy, “about half its budget went to maintaining the nuclear arsenal and protecting Americans from nuclear threats.” Clearly, this was information the new administration needed to know.

In his four years on the job, John MacWilliams, the Obama era Department of Energy’s first-ever Chief Risk Officer, had come to understand the department’s biggest risks “the way a corporate risk officer might understand the risks in a company.” He catalogued them for the next administration, with possible nuclear disasters at the top of the list. However, no one from the incoming Trump administration ever asked to see the catalog or showed any particular interest.

The electric grid deals with a more local issue. We learn that the “Columbia River and its tributaries generate more than 40 percent of hydroelectric power for the United States…” Were the dams to fail, it would be catastrophic.” MacWilliams said that people usually respond well to a crisis by quickly figuring out what needs to be done. We are “less good at imagining a crisis before it happens,” because managing risks requires “imagination.”

Einstein provides an example of imagining in advance. He wrote to President Roosevelt, warning him of the power generated by fission. This led the U.S. government to “understand that for a democracy to survive, it needed to beat Hitler to the atomic bomb.” Forewarned, we managed to accomplish the task.

Lewis focuses on the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce, in part because they collect enormous amounts of data and then analyze it. These departments tend to focus on safety and on predicting what problems might occur in the future. Nuclear waste, climate change (including extreme weather predictions), and food safety are areas that obviously need constant attention.

Lewis is concerned that too many of us in this era of Trump and “willful ignorance” are unwilling to learn more about possible risks. It is clear the government works at a very complex level, which few of us have the expertise or the stamina to understand. Fortunately, the author provides a wonderfully short, interesting and lucid book to explain this to us.

We know about many disasters that might occur. Michael Lewis warns that in any field, “It’s what you fail to imagine that kills you.”
League of Women Voters Completes Homelessness Study
*by Heather Kelly, 2nd Vice President/Action Chair*

Part of the League’s mission is to examine ongoing issues affecting our county. Before the pandemic hit, our Homelessness Committee was busy carrying out this mission. Their effort culminated in a study update, which we have provided as an appendix to this month’s *Voter.*

Even though units are not currently meeting in person at this time, we are inviting members to read through the study and email your responses to the discussion questions to Roslyn Duffy at action@seattlelwv.org.

We are mindful that we are living through a global crisis, so please consider this an opportunity to connect with your League community rather than a directive. In this time of great uncertainty, we are especially grateful to the Homelessness Committee for providing this reminder that the League will be here, doing its work, for our members and the people of King County.

**League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County**

**Homelessness Study Committee Discussion Questions for Units**

1. Should the LWVSKC strengthen the language of our public policy positions related to homelessness referenced in the study (e.g., change words like “encourage” to “require” or “advocate for”)?

2. Where are the gaps in our current public policy positions related to homelessness—what is missing, and what could be changed?

3. Should the LWVSKC adopt any of the LWVUS public policy positions related to homelessness? If yes, which one(s) and why?

4. Should the LWVSKC be more active in addressing homelessness? If so, what role should we have in that process, and what steps are involved in undertaking that effort?
# Board & Committee Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>2018-20</td>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>2019-21</td>
<td>Voter Service</td>
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<td>Units</td>
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<tr>
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*Note: All board members listed above are also members of the Education Fund Board*

**Education Fund Officers — same as above except Treasurer**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Linda Snider</td>
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**Nominating Committee**

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</table>
Homelessness in Seattle/King County

Homelessness Study Committee

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ECONOMY

Economic Development
- Support legislation that links the granting and continuation of corporate subsidies, tax preferences, and incentives to specific criteria which ensure transparency and accountability. 2007

A. Criteria should include clear and measurable goals that serve an essential public purpose and:
   1. Offer clear cost/benefit value to the public.
   2. Provide living wage jobs.
   3. Protect the environment.
   4. Sustain affordable housing.

HUMAN RESOURCES/SOCIAL POLICY

Human Services
- Support measures to provide basic food, shelter, and health care for those unable to provide for themselves and to provide training and opportunity for employment. 1982, 1984

A. Human services should be delivered by federal, state and local governments according to which levels can provide services most effectively and efficiently.
B. The federal government should tax for human services to provide a minimum base of revenue in order to ensure quality and equity among states and citizens. States and local governments can then tax according to their ability and desire to provide additional services.
C. Federal, state, and local governments should regulate the delivery of human services, with minimum standards set by the federal government to ensure equality among states and citizens.
D. The role of volunteers is important in the delivery of human services, but should be considered supplemental to governmental provision of basic services.
E. The siting of community-based residential facilities for individuals needing social services should include careful screening of clients, sufficient staff, agency accountability, early and continuous community/neighborhood involvement and adequate funding to meet these criteria. 1990
F. The role of local government in providing human services should include a process for assessing needs and planning for those needs. Human services should be integrated in city budgets as part of the whole since they are as important as other city services. LWE 2004
- Support funding for community mental health services that addresses factors such as the number of individuals needing services, complexity of client needs, and local factors such as housing and labor markets that affect the cost of providing services. 2004

Housing

- Support programs that promote individual choice of housing by enhancing the availability and affordability of alternatives throughout the region. Programs should: 1992, 2000

A. Allow flexibility in single family zones to provide for accessory units, duplexes, cluster housing and row houses.
B. Encourage the production of accessory dwelling units by simplifying the process and providing workshops and demonstrations which assist and inform.
C. Encourage multi-unit buildings that are designed to accommodate families and that provide for health and safety and play areas.
D. Encourage housing arrangements and zoning that support the needs of changing family patterns and aging population.
E. Allow manufactured housing which meets local standards. LWE 2004
F. Support zoning variances for the establishment of mobile home courts. LWE 2004
G. Support programs to aid homeless families and single adults and to prevent homelessness. 1995

Programs should:
A. Ensure accessibility of services for homeless people by providing and publicizing a central clearinghouse for referral to such services.
B. Increase outreach and engagement programs that serve homeless individuals with mental illness, chemical...
- **Support the efforts of government at all levels to increase the supply of affordable housing through a variety of programs. 2000**

- **Support policies which increase the density and the supply of affordable housing and include:** 2000
  A. Informed community participation in the planning process.
  B. Support for tenant responsibility and participation in planning, management, and maintenance.
  C. Projects which are small in scale, diverse in population, well-managed, and in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.
  D. Neighborhood amenities including parks and open space, schools, a good transportation plan, and access to services.

**Women**

- **Support local government policies that enable women to make economic and personal decisions for themselves and their families, and that: 1981, 1993, 1994**
  A. Encourage availability and quality of child care programs by government and the private sector.
  E. Ensure protection from domestic violence. 1994
  2. Support public funding of programs:
     a. To reach out to victims of domestic violence.
     b. To provide protection and assistance.
     c. To assure access to the courts.
     d. For rehabilitation.

**Teens**

- **Support prevention and intervention programs to overcome problems of violence, suicide, homelessness, and family dysfunction. 1995**

  D. Criteria for support of public funding for teen programs should include:
  1. Promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity
  2. Serving a prevention and/or intervention purpose.
  4. Reflecting the needs of the neighborhood and/or specific special populations.

  E. There should be cooperation and collaboration between public and private agencies to provide services for teens. Government agencies should be encouraged to contract with private agencies to provide services for teens.

  F. Criteria for contracting with private agencies should include:
  1. Oversight and periodic evaluation by the appropriate government agency.
  2. Non-discrimination policies consistent with those required of government agencies.
Children
- Support measures to assure that children have adequate food, clothing, education, and medical care, and a safe home environment free from abuse and neglect. While primary responsibility rests with the family, the community must provide the support if the family does not. 1985, 2003

Drug Abuse and the Community
- Support measures to expand and fund drug abuse prevention education and drug abuse treatment programs, as a means to reduce the demand for drugs.
  Measures should include: 1992
  C. Provision of integrated services as appropriate, including long-term treatment, counseling and mental health services, to all drug abusers and to meet the needs of individuals with co-occurring disorders. 1992, 2004

LAND USE

Neighborhoods
- Support density that is well planned, respects neighborhoods, facilitates public transportation, is environmentally sensitive and complies with growth management open space goals. 1992, 1994
  A. Suggested guidelines for density:
    1. Preserve, maintain, and enhance the character of urban areas.
    2. Protect environmentally critical areas and other types of open space.
    3. Support transportation goals.
    4. Provide access to jobs.
  5. Create desirable high density areas.
  7. Preserve open spaces in both urban and rural areas.
  8. Ensure neighborhood and community participation in the planning and design process.

B. Support the following concepts:
   1994
   1. Urban Villages.
   2. Sustainability.
In 2007, League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWV-SKC) published a study on homelessness titled “Ending Homelessness in King County.” The report gave an overview of the issue and detailed various strategies including the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County. The 2007 study did not result in the adoption of any new public policy positions by the LWV-SKC but did inspire a letter to the Director of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County in support of the Ten-Year Plan, which was set into motion in 2005. Fifteen years later, homelessness is still one of the most pressing issues facing Seattle and King County as a whole. The following is an update on the statistics associated with homelessness in King County, an in-depth look at risk factors, an explanation of the organizations and processes involved, and recommendations for moving forward.

Relevant Statistics
The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual requirement set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that is conducted by All Home, Seattle/King County’s Continuum of Care (CoC). The general street count takes place between 2:00 am and 6:00 am. The unaccompanied youth and young adult count and survey takes place on the day prior to the general street count, and the sheltered count takes place on the evening prior to the general street count. The general street count is then followed-up with a survey in the weeks after. The counts are generally considered to be an underestimate. Also, it is important to note that the count does not capture the total number of individuals who experience homelessness in a given calendar year, which is thought to be two-to-three times higher than the number provided by the PIT Count. Because of this, comparisons of data from years prior as though they display a trend using continuous data should be scrutinized, due to the discrete nature of the available data.

The Count
According to the 2019 general street count, 11,199 people were experiencing homelessness on January 25th, 2019. Approximately 47% of these individuals were unsheltered, meaning that they were “sleeping on the streets, on public transit, in abandoned buildings, public facilities, storage structures, vehicles, encampments, or any other place unfit for human habitation.”

Of the unsheltered population, 68% were residing in Seattle, and 21% were residing in the Southwest region. A detailed breakdown of the proportion of unsheltered individuals in each region can be found in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Proportion of unsheltered pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East County</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North County</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast County</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast County</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Proportions of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness by geographical region.
Figure 1. *Homelessness disproportionately affects people of color in Seattle/King County*. 

Of those experiencing homelessness, approximately 78% were single adults or members of adult households with no children. Approximately 21% were part of a family that included at least one adult and one child. Less than 1% were unaccompanied minors. 

Most of the individuals experiencing homelessness were people of color. Comparisons between the proportions of each race or ethnicity in the population of individuals experiencing homelessness, as compared to the corresponding proportion of individuals in the general King County population are illustrated in Figure 1. 

The Survey 

The PIT follow-up survey sampled 1,171 individuals in the weeks following the general street count. Of those surveyed, 81% were adults over the age of 24. 18% were young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, and 1% were children under the age of 18. 53% identified as male and 38% as female, while 3% identified as transgender, and 5% identified with another gender.

Approximately 4.8% of the general population living in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, according to a 2015 Gallup U.S. Daily survey. However, 34% of the unaccompanied youth and young adults under 25 and 20% of all others surveyed in 2019 identified as LGBTQ+.

Of those surveyed, 43% identified as White, 24% identified as Black or African American, 15% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 4% identified as Asian, 4% identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 9% identified with more than one race. 15% identified as Hispanic or Latino. 

Figure 1. *Homelessness disproportionately affects people of color in Seattle/King County*. 

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Of those surveyed, 43% identified as White, 24% identified as Black or African American, 15% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 4% identified as Asian, 4% identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 9% identified with more than one race. 15% identified as Hispanic or Latino.
Many individuals experiencing homelessness who were surveyed also identified as living with at least one health condition (64%). A detailed breakdown of reported health conditions can be found in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric or emotional conditions</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug or alcohol abuse</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic health problems</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical disability</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability or memory impairment</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS/HIV-related condition</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Percentages of reported health conditions among those who reported at least one health condition.*

Additionally, 37% reported that they were living with a health condition that was disabling, meaning that it may prevent them from holding employment or taking care of themselves. Only 6.4% of the King County population under 65 years of age is estimated to be living with a disability, which means that people with disabilities are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness.

Of those surveyed, 70% reported having experienced homelessness at least one other time before the current period of homelessness, and 61% reported that the duration of their current period of homelessness was at least one year.

Of those surveyed, 24% reported job loss as the primary reason for their current period of homelessness. Other top primary reasons can be found in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job loss</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol or drug use</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eviction</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce/separation/break-up</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not afford rent increase</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument with friend/family member which led to that person asking them to leave</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health issues</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/domestic violence</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Top reported primary reasons for homelessness.*

Three-quarters of those surveyed reported that rental assistance and an increase in affordable housing would help allow them to secure permanent housing. Other top responses included employment or increased income, money for moving costs, case management, and help clearing credit.
Most individuals surveyed reported that they are able to make use of the local services available to them (90%). However, most respondents also indicated barriers to accessing these services (76%). The most used services can be found in Table 4, and the most frequently reported barriers to accessing services can be found in Table 5.

### Table 4. Top reported services used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Used</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free meals</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus passes</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency shelter</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene services</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day shelter services</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health services</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5. Top reported barriers to accessing services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not knowing where to go for help</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having identification/documents</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not qualifying for the service they wanted</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never hearing back after having applied for services</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not following through or returning for services</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Subpopulations

In “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,” the federal government outlined four key subpopulations within the population of individuals experiencing homelessness. The subpopulations are: 1) individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, 2) veterans, 3) families with children, and 4) unaccompanied youth and young adults. Statistics associated with these subpopulations are estimates with confidence intervals that range from 6.01% to 12.15%, depending on the group.

### Chronic Homelessness

An individual who is experiencing chronic homelessness is defined as a person who has a disabling condition and either 1) has been experiencing homelessness continuously for at least one year or 2) has experienced homelessness for a total of one year over the course of at least four separate periods within three years.

Approximately 2,213 individuals were experiencing chronic homelessness at the time of the 2019 count, and approximately 41% of these individuals were unsheltered.

Approximately 55% identified as male, 40% as female, 2% as transgender, and 3% as gender non-conforming.

Approximately 49% identified as White, 16% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 12% as Black or African American, 8% as multiple races, 2% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 1% as Asian. Additionally, 11% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.
Approximately 92% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were in adult-only households, and 8% were in families with children. Less than 1% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were unaccompanied minors\(^3\).

**Veterans**

Approximately 830 veterans were experiencing homelessness on the night of the 2019 count. Of these, approximately 56% were unsheltered\(^3\).

Approximately 74% identified as male, 18% as female, 6% as transgender, and 2% with another gender\(^3\).

Approximately 48% identified as White, 23% as Black or African American, 11% as multiple races, 10% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 5% as Asian, and 3% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Additionally, 22% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino\(^3\).

Approximately 98% were in households without children, and 19% were experiencing chronic homelessness\(^3\).

**Families with Children**

Approximately 2,451 individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of the 2019 count were members of families with children. These individuals comprised approximately 763 families. Of these, approximately 97% were sheltered\(^3\).

Approximately 62% identified as female and 38% as male\(^3\).

Approximately 55% identified as Black or African American, 22% as White, 13% as multiple races, 5% as Asian, 3% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 2% as American Indian or Alaska Native. Additionally, 15% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino\(^3\).

Approximately 5% were experiencing chronic homelessness\(^3\).

**Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults**

Approximately 1,089 individuals experiencing homelessness at the time of the 2019 count were youth under the age of 18 or young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Of these, 68% were unsheltered\(^3\).

Approximately 60% identified as male, 31% as female, 3% as transgender, and 6% with another gender\(^3\).

Approximately 38% identified as White, 34% as Black or African American, 12% as multiple races, 10% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 3% as Asian, and 3% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Additionally, 20% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino\(^3\).

Approximately 4% were experiencing chronic homelessness\(^3\).
Risk Factors for Homelessness
There are several factors at play that have been demonstrated to be associated with an increased risk of experiencing homelessness. A few of these risk factors were covered above such as the disparities that exist for people of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community and the disproportionate representation in the population of those experiencing homelessness of individuals living with physical or mental disabilities. Other challenges that have been identified as potentially increasing the likelihood of homelessness include housing affordability, cost of childcare, wages, tax policy, zoning laws, eviction, domestic violence, and incarceration.

Cost of Living
According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a single adult in King County needs to make approximately $43,573 annually, or $20.95 per hour while working full time, in order to afford their basic living expenses. An adult with one child needs to make approximately $71,591 annually, or $34.42 per hour while working full time. However, the minimum wage in King County in 2020 is considerably less than this.

Childcare
The U.S. government defines “affordable” childcare as costing no more than 7% of a household’s income. However, many families often pay much more than this. Nationally, families below the federal poverty level (FPL) contribute closer to 30% of their income to childcare.

The statewide median monthly cost of childcare through a childcare center in 2018 for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers was $1135, $966, and $867, respectively. The cost of childcare has been steadily increasing, but the rate at which the government reimburses childcare centers that accept families who use subsidized childcare has not kept pace. Because of this, low-income families may find it difficult to find a childcare center that will allow them to use assistance at all. In fact, approximately only 1 of every 6 children who are eligible for assistance actually receives it.

Tax Policy
Because Washington has no personal income tax, the state relies on levies and property taxes to raise revenue. More than 60% of Washington’s tax base comes from sales and excise taxes, which means that the tax burden inherently falls more heavily on households that bring in less income. The lowest 20% of income earners, those who make less than $24,000 annually, contribute approximately 17.8% of their income to state and local taxes, while the top 20% of income earners, those who make at least $116,300 annually, contribute between 7.1% and 3.0% of their income. Households in the top 1% of income earners, those who make more than $545,900 annually, are at the low end of the aforementioned range, contributing 3% of their income to state and local taxes.

Property taxes present another issue in that individuals who own a home and have a fixed income may be priced out of their home if the property taxes increase beyond their ability to pay. The increase in property tax also gets passed on to renters, as
landlords must increase the cost of rent to afford the increase in property tax. Some people may be eligible for property tax exemptions which allow them to freeze the taxable value of their property at the time of their application. Some property owners may also be eligible for a reduction in the taxable value of their property, in addition to the freeze. 

**Zoning Laws**

In Seattle, approximately 75% of all land that can be used for residential purposes is currently zoned for single family housing. As the population has grown, the demand for rental properties has increased the pressure to develop more housing. Most of this growth has taken place in a small proportion of Seattle. Between 2006 and 2017, 80% of the housing growth was taken on by “urban villages and centers,” while single family housing zones took on only approximately 6%. A small proportion of single family housing (20%) is rented, which means that most Seattle renters look for their housing in apartment buildings. Real estate developers are now required to set aside a certain proportion of each new commercial or multi-family residential building to be “affordable housing” but may instead choose to pay a fine to the city. This rule change went into effect in phases during 2019, and the specific requirements depend on the location and type of residence. The options available to renters are limited, and the market favors the developers.

**Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence has a strong association with homelessness. The 2019 PIT count notes that 7% of their survey respondents reported that they were currently experiencing domestic violence. Additionally, surveyed individuals who were experiencing chronic homelessness were more than twice as likely than those experiencing non-chronic homelessness to report currently experiencing domestic violence. Families with children also reported higher rates of domestic violence than those without children (13% vs 6%) and were also more likely to report the domestic violence as the reason for their current period of homelessness (13% vs 5%).

New Beginnings, a local organization whose purpose is domestic violence survivor outreach, community education, & activism, reports that domestic violence is actually the leading cause of homelessness among women and children, noting that more than 80% of mothers with children who are experiencing homelessness are survivors of domestic violence. They also estimate that 63% of all women experiencing homelessness are survivors of domestic violence and that 16% of all individuals experiencing homelessness are survivors of domestic violence.

**Eviction**

According to a 2018 report by the Seattle Women’s Commission and the Housing Justice Project (HJP) of the King County Bar Association that studied 1,218 unlawful detainer cases (eviction proceedings) that took place in 2017, 86.5% of the filings were for nonpayment of rent and 52.3% of those nonpayment cases were for no more than one month of unpaid rent. Most of the time, tenants were required to pay attorney’s fees and court costs, and most
did not remain housed after the proceedings\textsuperscript{13}.

Most of the evicted survey respondents reported that they went on to experience homelessness. Some (25\%) reported being able to stay with family or friends, but 37.5\% became unsheltered. 25\% began living in a shelter or in transitional housing. Only 12.5\% were able to find another apartment or home\textsuperscript{13}.

**Incarceration and Re-Entry**

Incarceration and homelessness are strongly associated. Individuals experiencing homelessness are approximately eleven times more likely to be incarcerated than the general population, and individuals who have previously been incarcerated are approximately four times more likely than the general population to experience homelessness. The primary offenses for which individuals experiencing homelessness are cited and arrested include sleeping in public, sitting and/or lying down, and loitering. The subsequent inability to pay for fines or legal fees or to appear in court can also lead to arrest and incarceration. This system is actually more costly to the taxpayer; research out of Portland State University found $13 in savings in criminal justice system costs for every dollar invested for the purpose of helping those who are experiencing homelessness and are involved in the criminal justice system\textsuperscript{14}.

Individuals who are experiencing homelessness at the time of their arrest are also significantly more likely to be living with a mental illness or a substance use disorder. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), two million individuals with a mental illness are jailed annually. In a survey of incarcerated individuals who had been experiencing homelessness at the time of their arrest, 40\% reported that they had been taking a medication for their mental illness or had otherwise been using mental health services at that time\textsuperscript{14}. Notably, this statistic does not account for individuals with undiagnosed and/or untreated mental illnesses.

Incarceration can make it even more difficult to obtain housing, even if the offense was minor and/or nonviolent. Housing authorities can reject an applicant’s request for subsidized housing on the basis of their criminal history if they believe the person would “have a negative effect on others.”\textsuperscript{14-15} Additionally, a criminal history can also make it more difficult to obtain employment after incarceration\textsuperscript{14}. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), approximately 50,000 people exit the prison system and go directly to a homeless shelter each year\textsuperscript{14,16}.

**Mental Health**

According to the 2019 PIT count data, approximately 36\% of survey respondents reported living with a psychiatric or emotional condition. Thirty-five percent reported living with PTSD, and 32\% reported drug or alcohol abuse. These proportions were notably increased among survey respondents who were experiencing chronic homelessness: 64\% reported drug or alcohol abuse, 61\% reported a psychiatric or emotional condition, and 58\% reported PTSD. However, it is crucial to note that this increase is at least partially
due to the requirement for an individual to have a disabling condition (which includes psychiatric conditions) in order to qualify as experiencing chronic homelessness\(^3\).

### The Response System

The response system is a decentralized collaboration between government agencies and non-profit organizations that includes services like subsidized housing, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and shelters, among many others.

### Shelters

There are a number of different types of shelters included in the response system. Some shelters cater specifically to women, men, youth, families, or older adults. The shelters vary in the accommodations available, with some offering mats on the floor and others offering beds and allowing pets. Some shelters offer case management services in order to help with housing and other needs. Space is limited at each shelter\(^17\).

An interview with Sylvia Fuerstenberg, Executive Director of the now closed Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS), revealed that contrary to reports that there has been a recent drop in youth homelessness, shelters are full every night, and there is no real way to obtain an accurate count. She noted that PSKS was a city-funded program that received 50-60% of its budget through the city and had to fundraise the rest on its own. Fuerstenberg also stressed that housing that young people can afford in Seattle is almost impossible to find\(^18\).

Individuals who identify as transgender may face unique challenges while interacting with the homelessness response system and are also significantly more likely to experience homelessness than the rest of the population. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey reported that one fifth of those surveyed reported having experienced homelessness. Transgender individuals may be denied entry into shelters based on their gender identity. The same survey found that 55% of those surveyed had experienced harassment while trying to access a shelter and that 22% had been sexually assaulted by another shelter resident or a staff member\(^19\).

### Housing

#### The Housing First philosophy

The USICH refers to the Housing First philosophy as a “proven method of ending all types of homelessness” and the “most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness.” The philosophy prioritizes getting individuals and families experiencing homelessness into housing first, regardless of their current income, sobriety, or criminal history. When paired with support services, this strategy leads to lower rates of return to homelessness, lower use of crisis services, and higher housing retention rates\(^20\). The idea is that once a person has a stable place to live, they have a much better chance of successfully dealing with any of the other factors that led to the loss of their housing.

#### Tiny House Villages

Tiny House Villages offer a unique solution for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) is one of the largest
providers of the villages, in partnership with the City of Seattle, faith communities, and building trade organizations. Each house has electricity, heat, and a door that locks, and each village has restroom and kitchen facilities, along with onsite laundry and counseling services. Exit rates to permanent supportive housing are considerably higher for the Tiny House Villages (37%) than for basic shelters (4%) or enhanced shelters (23%). However, it can often be difficult to find land and funding for Tiny House Villages, and some neighborhoods have voiced opposition to the presence of the villages in their community.\textsuperscript{21-22}

**Transitional housing**

Transitional housing is a type of temporary housing that is intended to provide individuals and families with the services they need to move into permanent housing. Exit rates to permanent housing are considerably higher for transitional housing (73%) than for basic shelters (4%) or enhanced shelters (23%).\textsuperscript{17,22}

**Rapid re-housing**

Rapid re-housing (RRH) ties into the Housing First philosophy by placing individuals and families in housing, with no requirement that they first attain employment or sobriety. Financial assistance and case management are also part of this strategy. According to the HUD, RRH costs less than both shelters and transitional housing and leads to shorter periods of homelessness than with shelters and transitional housing. RRH has the best exit rate to permanent housing of any strategy (aside from prevention) at 81%.\textsuperscript{22-25}

**Affordable housing**

Affordable housing is considered to be housing that costs no more than 30% of a household’s income. If a household must spend more than 30% of their income on their housing, they are considered “cost burdened.” Households that make less than 80% of the area median income (AMI) are eligible for subsidized housing in King County, and households that bring in less than 30% of the AMI are prioritized. However, the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) also mandates that in order to qualify, the applicant must either have children under the age of 18, be at least 55 years old, or be disabled.\textsuperscript{26}

**Permanent supportive housing**

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is affordable housing with rental assistance and other services. Placement into PSH is an overall goal of the response system.\textsuperscript{17}

**King County Regional Homelessness Authority**

The Regional Homelessness Authority is an upcoming change to the system which was conceived in order to address what has been identified as “well-documented fragmentation.” The organization will be a collaborative effort between the City and the County in order to better respond to the crisis. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and King County Executive Dow Constantine submitted their proposal for the new collaborative response system to the City Council and County Council in September 2019. The idea was later formally accepted in December 2019. The purpose of the Regional Homelessness Authority is to unify what has been largely characterized as a decentralized response system with
fragmented funding. The Authority is planned to have an Implementation Board and a Governance Board, both of which are required to have three members with lived experiences of homelessness. They intend to devise a Five Year Plan and to have the existing Continuum of Care Board serve as an Advisory Committee.\textsuperscript{27-29}

Moving Forward

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted issue, and the best strategy for facing it is to listen to the voices of those who have experienced it firsthand. The factors that lead to someone losing their housing may be entirely different from one person to the next, which means that strategies are the most efficient when they prioritize the needs of the individual rather than providing one-size-fits-all solutions.

Several of the “risk factors” identified above are woven into the fabric of current policies and systems, and those who propose prevention strategies must be willing to consider that several large-scale systems may have to be overhauled in order to legitimately address the root causes of the crisis at hand. A solution that provides more housing but does not address what leads to the inability to afford housing is not a solution.
References


29. Regional Homelessness Authority. (2019). King County Regional Homelessness Authority as passed by the King County Council. Retrieved from https://regionalhomelesssystemhome.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/kcrha-kcc-passed-dec11.pdf