



Cowlitz County 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan 2025-2030



Introduction

The Homeless Housing and Assistance Act (RCW 43.185c) requires counties who administer local document recording fees designated for homeless and housing programs to have a local homeless housing plan. The purpose of the local plan is to address housing for homeless persons and to guide funding decisions made by the local legislative authority. Local homeless housing plans must be consistent with the statewide strategic plan developed by the Department of Commerce.

Acknowledgement

As part of RCW 43.185c, Cowlitz County is required to have a Homeless Housing Task Force. Membership on the task force must include a representative from the county, the largest city within the county, and a homeless or formerly homeless individual. The purpose of the task force is to advise a local government on the creation of a local homeless housing plan. The County's Homeless Housing Task Force has worked in collaboration with Health & Human Services, community partners, and the general public to develop this plan. Please see Appendix C for a full outline of stakeholder and public engagement in the development of this plan.

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Overview

Housing and Homeless Interventions

Prevention and Diversion – Light interventions that prevent homelessness by working with landlords and/or individuals to resolve issues, can also include assistance for rent to keep a person housed.

Emergency Shelter – Provides short-term, temporary shelter for those experiencing homelessness, most often up to 90 days.

Transitional Housing – Provides ongoing support for a period of two years until individuals can learn the skills necessary to transition to housing in the community.

Rapid Rehousing – Provides housing focused case management and support needed to house individuals quickly by assisting with deposits and rent so the person can regain housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Provides ongoing support for individuals with high needs related to medical and/or behavioral health.

Housing Resources

Chai Rivers Recovery Café, Community House on Broadway, Compass-SL Start and Associates, CORE Health, Destination Hope and Recovery, Emergency Support Shelter, Faithful Servants, Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, Holistic Opportunities for Personal Evolution (HOPE), Housing Opportunities of Southwest Washington, Kelso Housing Authority, Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP), Love Overwhelming, Oxford houses, Pacific Island Community of Oregon LLC, Salvation Army, Seventh Generation Eldercare, Strengthening Foundations Counseling, Veteran's Integration Program and the faith-based community.

Local Plan

The state Department of Commerce issued new guidance and requirements for counties to include in the 2025-2030 local plan. This plan includes those requirements, identified with an asterisk(*), along with additional local priorities. In addition to aligning with state requirements and local priorities, Cowlitz County commits to aligning with federal policies and priorities.

While the local plan is developed by the Homeless Housing Task Force, the local legislative authority can make edits prior to their approval. As outlined in RCW, the plan serves to guide funding decisions for the local legislative authority. When the county is considering allocating Document Recording Fees, it must be an activity that is connected to the local plan. *Please note, this plan does not commit the county to funding each of the activities and all funding decisions are reliant on the availability of funding.*

The previous local plan, covering 2019-2024, included a variety of goals with the #1 priority goal to Increase Access to Affordable Housing. Cowlitz County invested approximately \$2.8 million towards this goal during the previous 5-year plan, as well as other accomplishments. Please see appendix D for a full summary from the 2019-2024 plan.

Eligible activities under the plan, per RCW 43.185c.050, include:

- Rental and furnishing of dwelling units for the use of homeless persons
- Costs of developing affordable housing for homeless persons, and services for formerly homeless individuals and families residing in transitional housing or permanent housing and still at risk of homelessness
- Operating subsidies for transitional housing or permanent housing serving formerly homeless families or individuals
- Services to prevent homelessness, such as emergency eviction prevention programs including temporary rental subsidies to prevent homelessness
- Temporary services to assist persons leaving state institutions and other state programs to prevent them from becoming or remaining homeless
- Outreach services for homeless individuals and families
- Development and management of local homeless plans including homeless census data collection; identification of goals, performance measures, strategies, and costs and evaluation of progress towards established goals
- Rental vouchers payable to landlords for persons who are homeless or below thirty percent of the median income or in immediate danger of becoming homeless
- Other activities to reduce and prevent homelessness as identified for funding in the local plan

Goals

#1 - Increase Training, Education, and Job Skills Opportunities

Objective	Strategy	Measure	Timeline
1.1 Expand opportunities for financial literacy training	a. Support programs that increase access to financial literacy training, include in resource guide	More classes are available	2026, assess annually
1.2 Expand opportunities for job readiness and life skills training	a. Support programs that increase access to job readiness and life skills training, include in resource guide	More training is available	2026, assess annually
1.3 Expand opportunities for prevention education	a. Support programs educating tenants, landlords, property management, or others that will build skills to prevent evictions	Increased education available	2026, assess annually
1.4 Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce*	a. Share training opportunities with providers	More training available to providers	Ongoing

#2 - Support a homeless system focused on self-sufficiency

Objective	Strategy	Measure	Timeline
2.1 Prioritize short-term and transitional housing interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support emergency shelter interventions, focused on self-sufficiency b. Support short-term or transitional housing programs where individuals are able to sustain on their own after assistance c. Support one-time or start up funding for permanent supportive housing 	Additional short-term and transitional housing interventions available (See Appendix A – System Capacity)	2026, assess annually
2.2 Prioritize assistance or services for individuals ready to engage in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support programs where individuals actively engage with self-sufficiency goals 	Individuals in programs are accomplishing self-sufficiency goals	2026, assess annually
2.3 Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand diversion and short-term prevention programs for individuals in need of light-touch intervention 	Additional light-touch interventions available	2026, assess annually
2.4 Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continuous review of Coordinated Entry prioritization process b. Support programs focused on youth and family stability 	Prioritization process is consistently reviewed	Annually
2.5 Promote an equitable, accountable and transparent homeless crisis response system*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordination among service providers through monthly meetings b. Contract monitoring c. Coordinated Entry report d. Point in Time report or other relevant reports 	Reports are complete and published on County website	Ongoing, Annually

#3 - Increase access to affordable housing

Objective	Strategy	Measure	Timeline
3.1 Support efforts to build housing affordably	a. Collaborate with cities, and other appropriate partners, aligning efforts when appropriate around codes, zoning, policy, legislation, etc.	Changes to code, zoning, policy, etc. reduce barriers for developers and builders when possible	2026, assess annually
3.2 Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs*	a. Support additional affordable housing units, aimed at diverse incomes and individual needs	Increase in affordable housing units	Ongoing

Prioritization criteria for homeless/housing capital projects

Investment in pre-development, development or construction of homeless housing capital projects will be consistent with local comprehensive plans, zoning, or other applicable countywide planning policies. The criteria and procedure used to evaluate homeless housing capital projects will include feasibility, community support, and funding availability. Potential projects will be reviewed internally by staff for alignment with any funding criteria and by the Board of County Commissioners for a final decision.

Appendix A – System Capacity

This document includes a variety of housing projects within Cowlitz County, it is **not** a list of projects funded by the county.

Short-term and Transitional Housing						
Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
Community House on Broadway (CHOB)	Families and single adults	Clean and sober, background check (no sex offenders), mandatory participation in services (MH, SUD, housing, employment, case management, medications, save income)	≤ 90 days (may stay longer if working towards stable housing)	93	158	361 adults/ 144 children
CHOB - Beth's Place	13-17 years old	Clean and sober, background check (no sex offenders), participate in educational program and MH/SUD services	Not time limited	24	48	1 *opened in December of '24
Emergency Support Shelter	Individuals fleeing domestic violence	Fleeing intimate partner DV within last 14 days (can include any type of abuse, not only physical)	≤ 90 days	11	34 Add'l cribs/ cots	104
Family Promise	Families with children	Must be homeless, have a minor child, able to work or produce income, have a way to be accepted into housing of any form, drug and alcohol free, background check and vetting process, able to coexist with other families in communal space	≤ 90 days	4	16	45

Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
Catholic Community Services - SSVF RRH	Veterans	Under 80% AMI	6-9 months	15	23	23
CAP - CHG RRH	Single adults and families	Under 80% AMI	12 months or less, graduated subsidy	17	30	45
CAP - YAHP RRH	18-24 years old	Homeless (McKinney Vento), under 80% AMI	≤ 2 years, graduated subsidy	14	20	23
CHOB - Core Health Extended Support Services (CHESS)	Adults who are medically fragile, elderly and/or have high MH needs	Must be able perform own ADLs or have a caregiver, no sex offenders, mandatory participation in services (including MH & SUD)	≤ 2 years (extended stays when needed)	18	49	178
CHOB - TBRA RRH	Families and single adults	In recovery, income to support their share of rent and utilities	1 year (may extend)	5	12	12
Housing Opportunities of SW Washington (HOSWWA) - Emergency Housing Vouchers	Adults	Low income	2 years	42	-	21
HOSWWA - GPD TH	Veterans	Military discharge (must not be dishonorable)	≤ 2 years	35	-	66
HOSWWA - TBRA RRH	Cowlitz County, Lgv	Homeless with supportive services	2 years	31	-	31
Janus - GRIP RRH	18-24 years old	Literally homeless, within 14 days of losing housing, or fleeing violence	≤ 1 year, on a case-by-case basis	15	31	23
Mountain Ministry	Men	Clean and sober, faith based, live and work on campus	12 months	1	20	-
Salvation Army - HOPE House	Single adults	Clean and sober, MH and SUD assessment	≤ 1 year	7	7	22

308 366 1,098

Permanent Housing						
Project Based (includes voucher programs)						
Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
CHOB - Country Run	Families and single adults	CHOB program participants that are steady in their recovery	Not time limited	20	60	-
CAP - PSH House	Chronically homeless men	Homeless, disabling condition	Not time limited	6	6	7
Evergreen Sober Living	Women only (no children)	Clean and sober, attend 3 in person meetings per week in 12 step fellowship	Not time limited	1	9	-
Faithful Servants	Men	Must be clean and sober (pass a UA) and obtain MH/SUD assessment, able to work, faith based	Not time limited	2	29	-
Forgiven House	Men	30 days clean and sober, means to pay rent	Not time limited	1	8	
HOSWWA - Phoenix House	Parents with children	SUD and recently exited residential treatment	2+ years	20	-	26
HOSWWA - Columbia View	Elderly/Disabled	Low income	Not time limited	16	-	15
HOSWWA - Hawthorne	Elderly/Disabled low income	Low income	Not time limited	61	-	63
HOSWWA - Riverview	Elderly/Disabled	Elderly/Disabled	Not time limited	35	-	35
HOSWWA - Tulip Valley	Low income family	USDA income criteria	Not time limited	39	-	39
HOSWWA - Lilac Place	75% homeless, elderly, disabled - some set aside for DV	HUD Voucher	Not time limited	38	-	35
HOSWWA - Stratford Arms	Homeless Veterans	HUD Voucher	Not time limited	20	-	15

Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
HOSWWA - Sylvester	Low income, 62+	HUD Voucher	Not time limited	35	-	24
HOSWWA - Sunrise Village	Individuals and families	Homeless, below 60% AMI	Not time limited	20	-	0
Kelso Housing Authority - Public Housing	Individuals and families	Income and tenant screening	Not time limited as long as they income qualify	116	-	118
Oxford Housing	Single men, men with children, single women, women with children	Recovering from SUD, pay equal shared expenses, follow house rules	Not time limited	15	118	-
Campus Towers	62+	Rent based on income	not time limited	104	-	-
Westgate Terrace	62+ or disabled	Low income	not time limited	101	-	-
Parkland Terrace	62+ or disabled	Low income	not time limited	52	-	-
				776	328	556

Tenant Based (includes voucher programs)						
Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
CAP - HEN RRH	Single adults	DSHS referral, Homeless (HUD)	DSHS eligibility reviewed annually	100	100	175
CAP - CBRA RRH	Single adults and families	Behavioral Health Condition, less than 50% AMI, client pays 30% of income towards rent, must be engaged in BH support/case management	Long term, annual recertificat ions	10	10	11

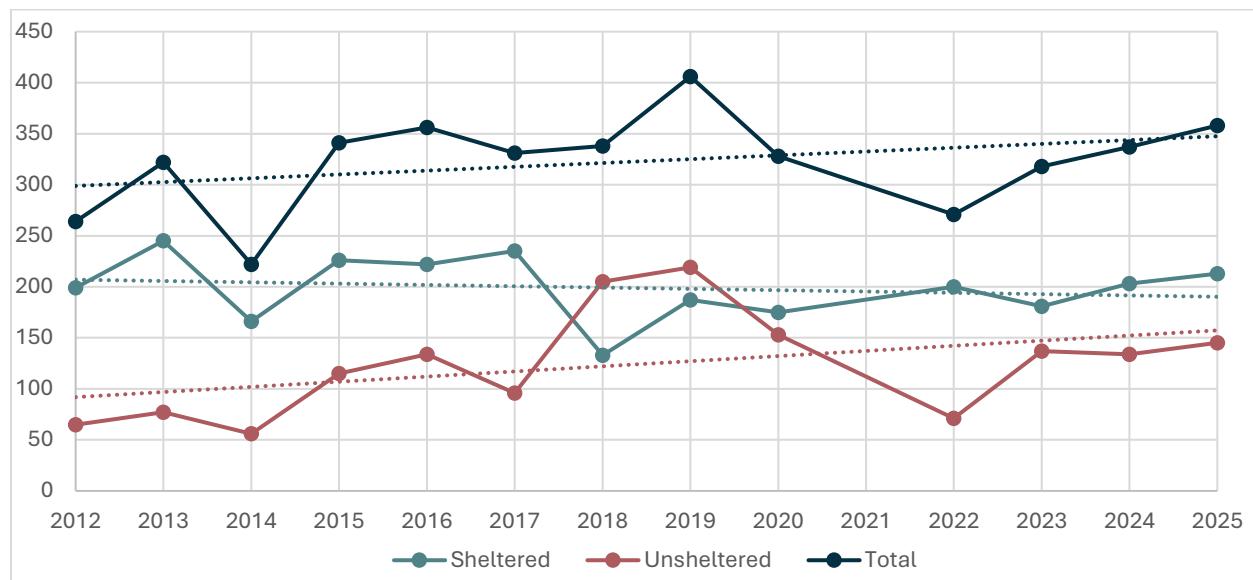
Agency/ Program Name	Population Served	Eligibility	Program Duration	Units	Beds	2024 Individuals served
Habitat for Humanity - Build and buy own home	Low income families and individuals, including veterans, disabled, elderly	30-65% AMI, 500 hours sweat equity	N/A	3 or 4		
HOSWWA - Housing Choice Voucher	Adults (excluding Kelso and Kalama)	HUD Voucher	Not time limited	708		436
HOSWWA - Non-elderly, disabled (NED) <i>*project sunsets in 2026</i>	Non elderly, disabled (excluding Kelso and Kalama)	Disabled adult, must fit into 1 bedroom unit	Not time limited	435		228
HOSWWA - Mainstream 5	Homeless family with disabled adult in household	Homeless	Not time limited	133		59
HOSWWA - Stability Voucher	DV Survivor	ESS referral and Homeless	Not time limited	5		1
HOSWWA - VASH	Veterans (excluding Kelso and Kalama)	HUD Voucher	Not time limited	63		28
HOSWWA - Foster Youth (FYI)	Foster youth	Homeless Foster youth 18-25	3 years or 5 years with participation in Rent Well classes	25		3
Kelso Housing Authority - Housing Choice Voucher	Individuals and families	Income and HUD screening	Not time limited as long as they income qualify	328		325

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*Not all projects count units and beds, and it could vary. For example, a project could have a single unit that could at one time include 1 bed or at another time include multiple beds.

Appendix B – Point in Time

Cowlitz County's Point in Time Count



The Point in Time is a one-time count of people who are sheltered (staying in emergency shelter and temporary housing) and unsheltered (places not meant for human habitation). The data above reflects Cowlitz County's Point in Time count over time from 2012-2025.

The state completes the sheltered count for all counties by pulling data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for shelter and temporary housing programs that enter data into that system. Cowlitz County Health & Human Services and community partners conduct the unsheltered count by completing surveys with individuals living outdoors.

More detailed information about the Point in Time count can be found here:

<https://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/2538/Point-in-Time-PIT-Count-Data>

Statewide data can be found here:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/homelessness-response/planning-and-reporting/pit-count/>

Appendix C – Stakeholder and Public Engagement

Key Stakeholder participation and collaboration

The Cowlitz County Homeless Housing Task Force (HHTF) includes a wide range of membership. The members who participated in the development of the plan brought valuable experience from the following areas: City of Longview, City of Kelso, lived experience of homelessness, board member with a local shelter provider, legal aid, law enforcement, experiencing working in homeless/housing programs or services, experiencing working in behavioral health, experience working with local veterans, experience working within medical facilities, and community members at large.

A variety of additional local stakeholders attended HHTF meetings and provided feedback on the local plan development including: Chai Rivers, Community House on Broadway, Emergency Support Shelter, Family Health Center, Housing Opportunities of SW Washington, Lower Columbia CAP, Love Overwhelming, Salvation Army, and Woodland Action Center.

Stakeholders and the general public were able to provide input and feedback through a variety of ways:

- Online feedback form, available 7/2025 through 12/2025
- HHTF Meetings – Regular monthly meetings
- Public Work Session – 10/21/2025
- Public Hearing – 12/16/2025

Appendix D – 2019-2024 Plan Update

COWLITZ COUNTY

5-Year Plan Update

2019-2024 Homeless Housing Plan



Cowlitz County adopted the 2019-2024 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan in December of 2019.

Below provides an update to progress on the goals within that plan.



Increase access to affordable housing units.

- ✓ Allocated \$752,200 for additional low-income senior housing units (Campus Towers)
- ✓ Allocated \$692,200 for additional low-income housing units (Sunrise Village)
- ✓ Allocated \$695,000 for additional low-income housing units (Catlin & Main project)
- ✓ Allocated \$719,000 for additional low-income housing units & preservation of existing low-income housing (Habitat for Humanity)
- ✓ Local jurisdictions made several code/zoning adjustments to increase housing flexibility around Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's), townhouses, cottage clusters, cottage housing, lot coverage, multi-family options, setback and parking updates.



Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness.

Maintain effective and efficient coordinated entry system for housing and housing related services.

- ✓ Compliance with state and federal Coordinated Entry requirements, including a by-name list within the Homeless Management Information System.
- ✓ Monthly meetings have been held with community partners, including homeless/housing service providers, behavioral health providers, schools, etc.
- ✓ Local jurisdictions embedded behavioral health professionals with law enforcement who quickly engage with individuals experiencing homelessness



Increase Prevention and Education opportunities.

- ✓ Allocated \$22,900 to support financial literacy classes for at-risk youth & families.
- ✓ Passed along training opportunities to local service providers.



Maintain a crisis response system in Cowlitz County.

System is effective and efficient, with the most appropriate resources and interventions for the homeless population.

- ✓ Permanent housing projects assisted 713 people (533 households) in obtaining and/or maintaining housing. There were 583 exits, with 385 of those to permanent housing.
 - Percent exits to permanent housing: 66.04% (state measurement: above 59%)
 - Returns to homelessness: 59 out of 385, 15% (state measurement: below 10%)
- ✓ Temporary housing projects assisted 686 people (333 households)
 - Average length of stay: 46 days (state measurement: less than 90 days)
- ✓ System capacity was reviewed annually with service providers and submitted to Commerce on the Housing Inventory Report.
- ✓ Maintained funding support for emergency shelter and supportive housing interventions.
- ✓ Allocated \$2,000,000 for construction of a new youth shelter.
- ✓ Maintained a process to support projects that address homelessness during an emergency.
- ✓ Allocated \$18,000 for severe weather shelter.



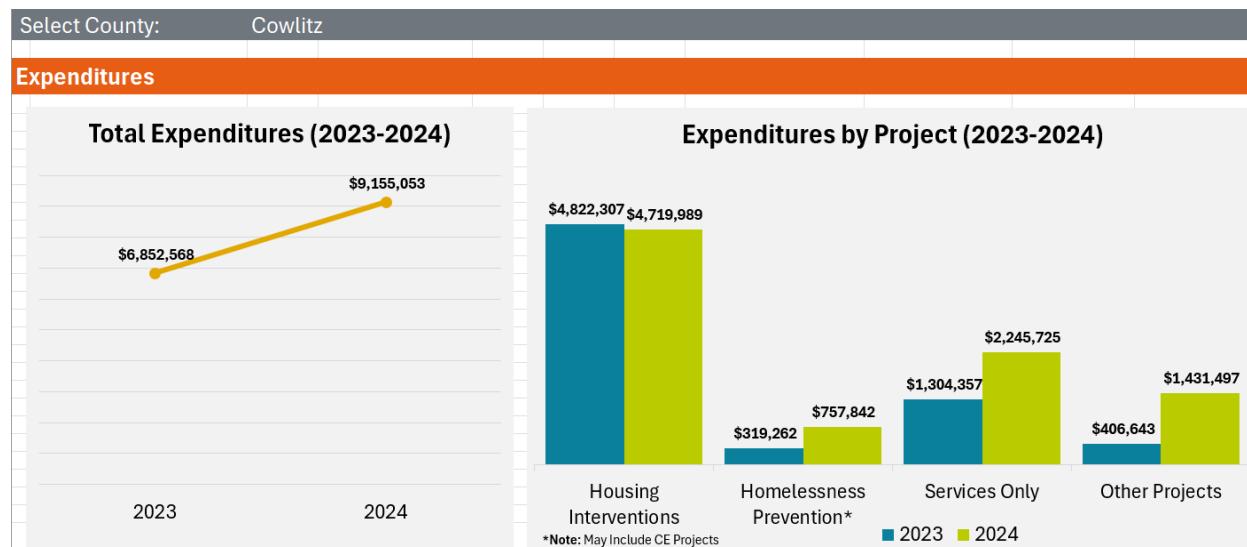
Increase the use of data to drive strategies and decision making.

- ✓ Completed Point in Time and submitted data to Department of Commerce, posted reports online.
- ✓ Collected and reviewed Coordinated Entry data.

Appendix E – Estimates of Service Levels

The local plan must include screenshots of an analysis tool provided by Commerce. The below tool pulls information from a report Commerce puts together called the ‘Golden’ report. The Golden report includes expenditure, project types, and bed information from projects within Cowlitz County funded from a variety of fund sources including federal, state, and local sources. It is **not** a reflection of projects funded with county funding. The full Golden report can be found here:

<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/v9pliuty6kcb36uwjd9ihb2q2rmik0oz/file/1720796420868>



Housing Interventions – Includes emergency shelter (ES), transitional housing (TH), rapid re-housing (RRH), permanent supportive housing (PSH), and other permanent housing models (e.g., PSH that does not require a disability for entry).

- Emergency Support Shelter, Community House on Broadway (ES, TH, RRH, other permanent housing), Family Promise (ES), Housing Opportunities of SW Washington (TH, RRH, other permanent housing), Salvation Army (TH, RRH), Lower Columbia CAP (RRH, PSH), Catholic Community Services (RRH), Janus Youth (RRH), Kelso Housing Authority (PSH)

Homelessness Prevention – Refers to programs that provide services or financial assistance to prevent a household from experiencing homelessness.

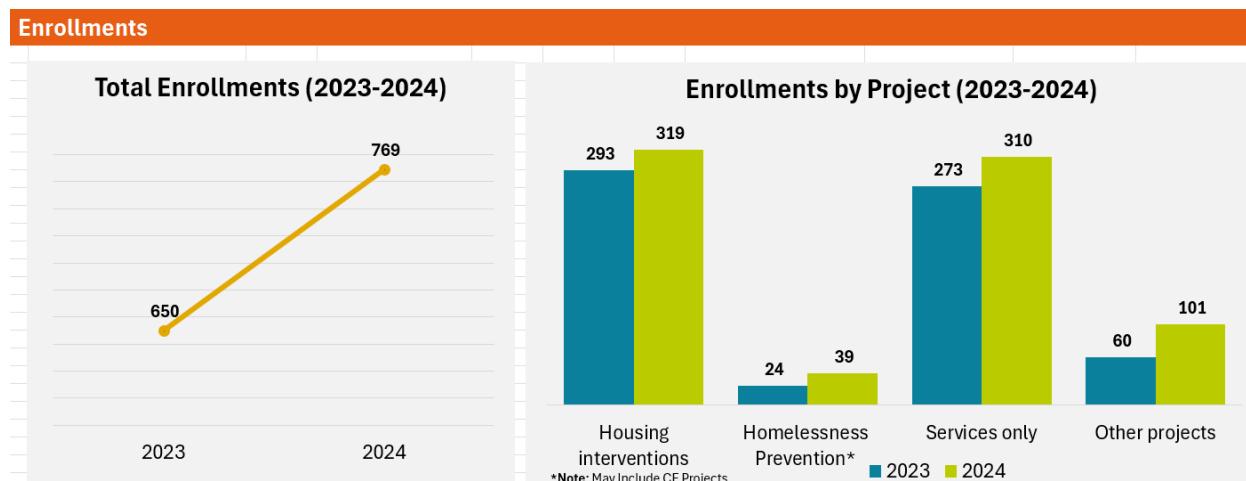
- Housing Opportunities of SW Washington, Lower Columbia CAP, Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Cascade AIDS Project, Community Mediation Center

Services Only – Includes coordinated entry, services-only projects, street outreach, and day shelters.

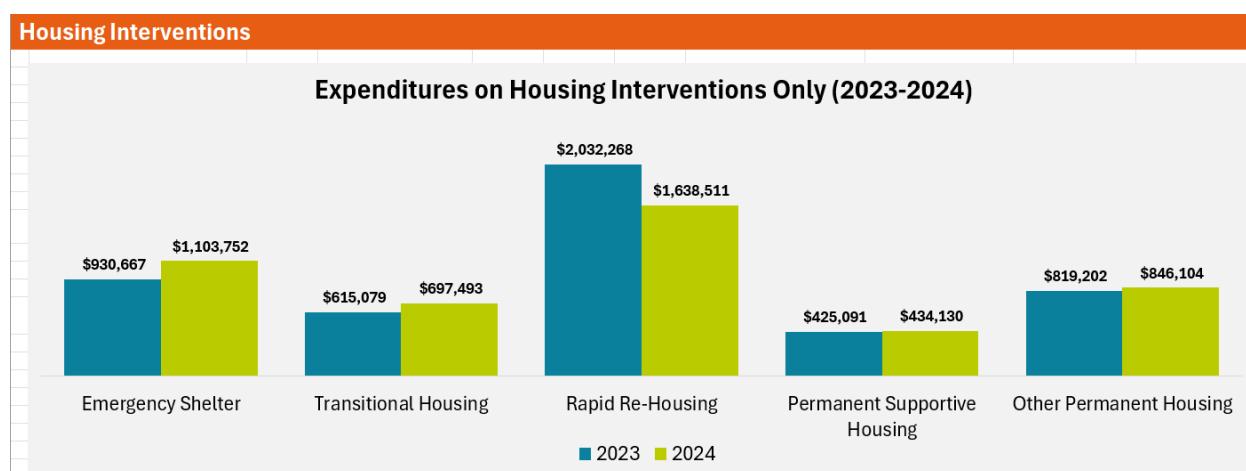
- Housing Opportunities of SW Washington (Case Management, Janus Youth (Street Outreach), CORE Health (PATH Street Outreach & Supportive Services), Salvation Army (Hope Village), Coordinated Entry

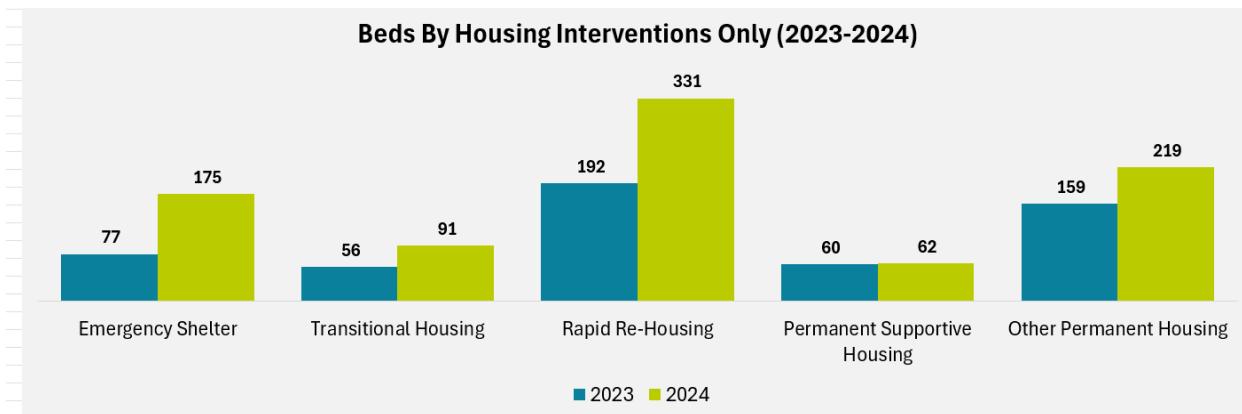
Other Projects – Includes Safe Haven programs, sanctioned encampments, and severe weather shelters. It also includes some projects without HMIS project codes.

- Lower Columbia CAP (Care to Home, CBRA), CORE Health (Peer Pathfinder), Family Health Center (Phoenix House), Community House on Broadway (Beth's Place), Campus Towers

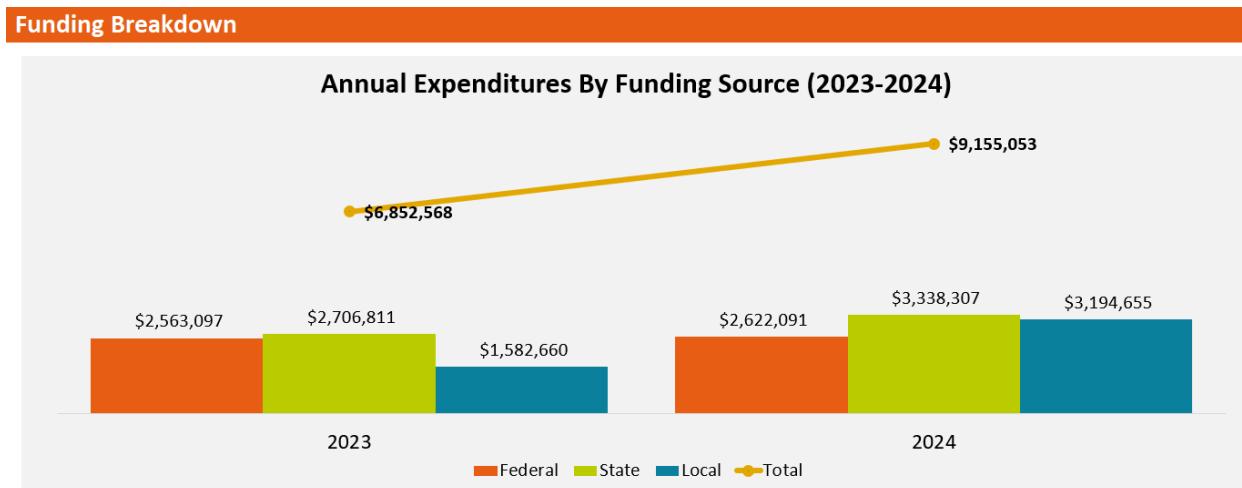


Enrollments – Refers to the number of households active in participating projects on a specified date each year.





Beds – Refers to the total number of beds per housing intervention type.



Appendix F – Survey of Fund Sources

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount received SFY24	Actual/projected received SFY25
Mental Health Sales and Use Tax RCW 82.14.460	Local	Not receiving/collecting	Operating & Capital	\$2,838,962	\$18,224
Housing and Related Services Sales and Use Tax RCW 82.14.530	Local	Not receiving/collecting	Operating & Capital	N/A	N/A
Affordable and Supportive Housing Sales and Use Tax RCW 82.14.540	State	Receiving/collecting	Operating & Capital	\$213,789	\$161,897
Local Housing Levies RCW 84.52.105	Local	Not receiving/collecting	Capital	N/A	N/A
Document Recording Surcharge, Local Portion RCW 36.22.250	Local	Receiving/collecting	Operating & Capital	\$638,030	\$683,907
Consolidated Homeless Grant	State	Receiving/collecting	Operating	\$2,487,503	\$2,412,757
Emergency Solutions Grant	Federal	Not receiving/collecting	Operating	N/A	N/A
Community Development Block Grant – Public Services	Federal	Receiving/collecting	Capital	\$67,000	\$66,000
Continuum of Care Grant	Federal	Not receiving/collecting	Operating	N/A	N/A
Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Grant	Federal	Not receiving/collecting	Operating	N/A	N/A

Appendix G – Estimates of Permanent and Emergency Housing Needs

The local plan must include a 5-year estimate of permanent and emergency housing needs. Counties are required to derive these estimates from a tool Commerce developed called the Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT), the full tool can be viewed here:

<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/i4ku9gqhckvs73yj66mzlf3hn036ct5>

Below is the 5-year estimate from the tool for low-income non-permanent supportive housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing/shelter.

0-30% AMI Non-PSH	0-30% AMI PSH	Emergency Housing/Shelter
693	340	44