

## News Release



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## **Count Us In 2019 shows first reduction in homelessness since 2012 for Seattle/King County**

### **Summary**

Count Us In, the annual point-in-time count for Seattle and King County, found a total of 11,199 people experiencing homelessness countywide, including 5,971 people (53%) sheltered and 5,228 people (47%) unsheltered. This represents an overall decrease of eight percent compared to 2018, and a decrease of seventeen percent among the unsheltered population from topline data released by All Home today. The full Count Us In report, estimated to be complete by the end of May, will include more detailed information on the results, including a sub-regional breakdown and a deeper analysis of the Count Us In survey responses.

### **Story**

Count Us In 2019 found 11,199 people experiencing homelessness across the region on January 25, 2019, including 5,971 people sheltered in emergency shelters, safe havens and transitional housing and 5,228 people on the streets, in vehicles or staying in tents or encampments. The count marks a seventeen percent decrease in unsheltered people and an eight percent decrease overall, the first decrease in homelessness in the region in the past seven years.

Point in time counts are typically an undercount; however, the count provides promising indicators that our collective efforts are making a difference. There were decreases observed across all subpopulations, including families experiencing homelessness (seven percent), veterans (ten percent), and unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness (twenty eight percent).

While the estimate of unsheltered homelessness decreased, the number of people sheltered on the night of the count increased, indicating more people in crisis in our community are connecting to the services and resources they need. Seattle, King County and other jurisdictions added just over 530 new emergency shelter beds across the system in 2018.

“Count Us In is a critical tool to bring the community together around the issue of homelessness and to enumerate trends over time that influence local policy and planning,” said Kira Zylstra, Acting Director of All Home. “This year’s results and our local system’s data indicate progress. More people in our community are connected with services than ever before and permanent housing placements through our system continue to rise each year, yet more than 11,000 of our neighbors are without housing on any given night. Now is the time to take urgent action to scale what works for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.”

The point-in-time count provides a snapshot of homelessness on a given night in January. To provide a more detailed look at the homeless service system and the people served, All Home also unveiled a new [interactive data dashboard](#). The dashboard provides the most current information available on the needs of people enrolled in services.

Data from the new homeless response system dashboards affirm that exits to permanent housing have increased over the past three years, with 17,992 successful exits between 2016 and 2018. Despite increased system capacity and efficiency, the rate at which people are becoming homeless outpaces the ability to house them within existing resources.

"We are heartened to see evidence that our work to build regional collaborations with philanthropy, housing authorities, service providers and government partners are showing progress, particularly in reducing homelessness for veterans, youth and young adults, and families with children," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "As a community, we must renew and strengthen our commitment to creating affordable housing and connecting people to the services they need to build permanent pathways out of homelessness."

"We must continue to make progress by employing strategies that are moving people inside then into permanent housing. We have made historic investments in expanding the City's 24/7 shelters with case managers, expanding our Navigation Team who connects people with shelter and services, and investing programs that are more effective in moving people out of homelessness," said Mayor Durkan. "Still it is not enough. This is a regional crisis that demands a regional response - none of us can do it alone to help the thousands in need of housing and services. Government, philanthropy, businesses, and human services providers must continue our work together to expand affordable housing, treatment services and effective programs like enhanced shelters."

Looking ahead, the City of Seattle, King County and All Home have joined with many community partners to begin to design a regional action plan and a new consolidated authority to address regional homelessness. In December, King County Executive Constantine and Seattle Mayor Durkan affirmed [10 interdependent Actions](#) to unify and redesign the regional response to homelessness. That work is focused on building a system that is accountable to customers and is based on a shared, community-wide theory of change.

The complete 2019 Count Us In report is still being finalized, with an estimated release of late May. The final report will include more detailed information including sub-regional estimates of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness as well as the needs and characteristics of people experiencing homelessness.

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