



KCRHA
King County Regional Homelessness Authority

2026 King County Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count

Introduction

Using Point-in-Time (PIT)¹ Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC)² data collected in early 2026, this initial release provides a snapshot of homelessness in King County and the shelter and housing resources available across the region.

The PIT Count estimates the number of people experiencing homelessness on a given night. Since 2022, KCRHA has used Respondent Driven Sampling for the unsheltered count, in partnership with the University of Washington, to support a more reliable and ethical estimate.³ The HIC catalogs available shelter and housing inventory on a single night.

This initial release highlights key findings from the 2026 PIT Count and HIC. A comprehensive report with additional analysis will be published later this year.

These findings should also be understood alongside broader system flow trends: the homelessness response system helps many people exit homelessness each year, but continued inflow, limited shelter capacity, and constrained affordable housing supply mean more people enter the system than exit.

The goal is to provide the community with an early view of homelessness trends, demographics, and system resources. Broader drivers of homelessness, length of homelessness, and program performance are outside the scope of this document. Program performance information is available on KCRHA's [System Performance Dashboard](#).

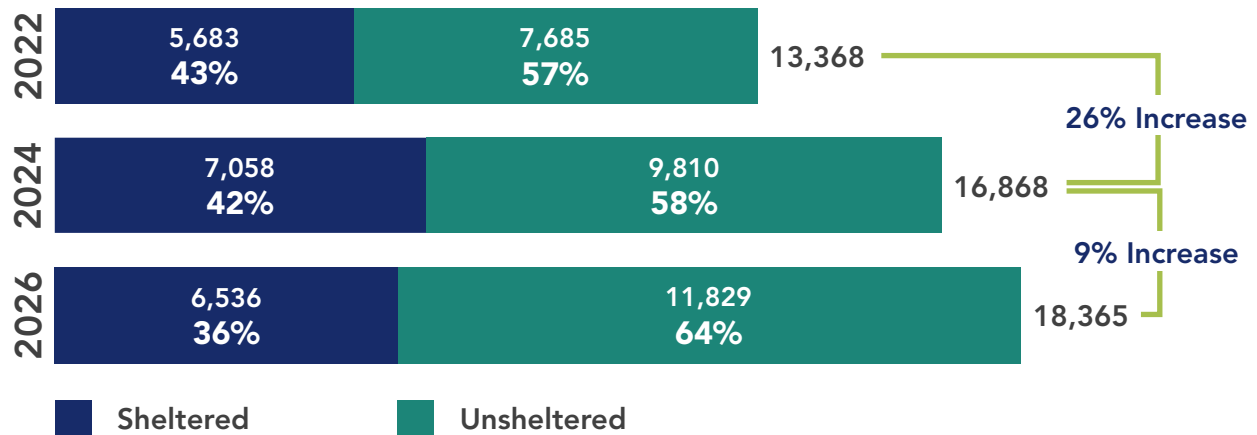
Point-in-Time Count 2026

What is the extent of homelessness in King County?

The 2026 Point-in-Time Count shows that homelessness in King County continued to increase, though at a slower rate than in prior years. Between 2022 and 2024, the overall number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 26%. Between 2024 and 2026, that rate of increase slowed to 9%, suggesting some stabilization in the growth trajectory even as overall need continues to rise.

The graph below shows the total number of individuals experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness (or overall homelessness). It also shows the proportion and number of people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness since 2022, when both unsheltered and sheltered PIT counts were completed.

Comparison of Overall Homelessness by Individuals



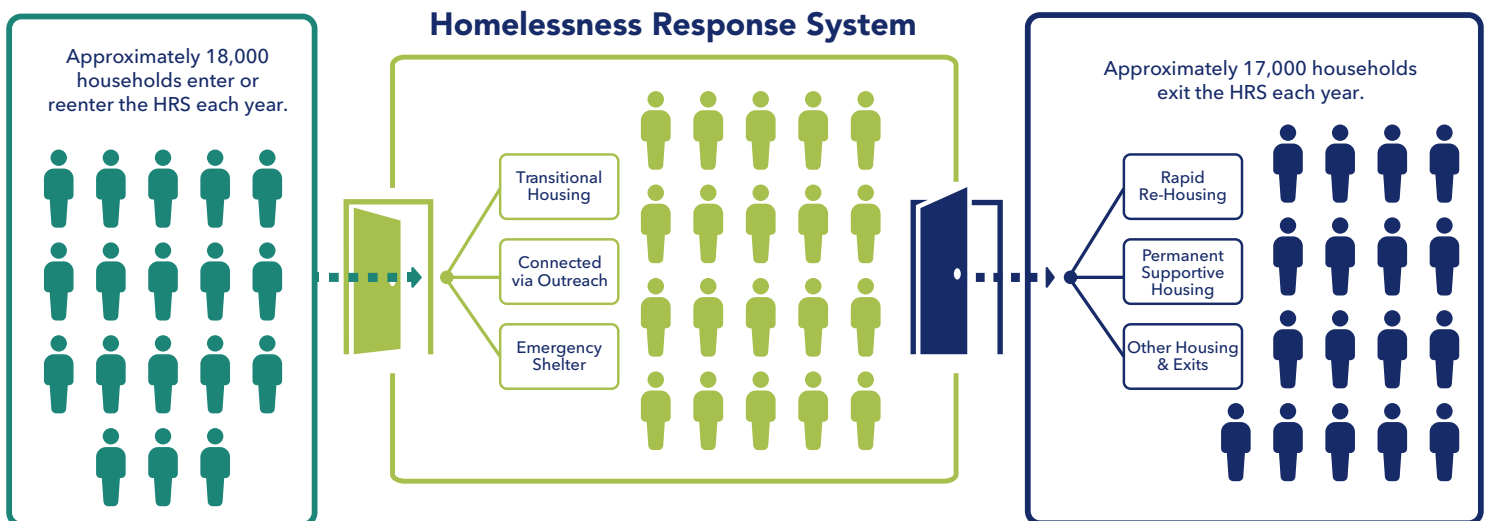
While overall shelter capacity has remained relatively stable in recent years, shelter resources declined between 2024 and 2026, driven largely by reductions in family shelter capacity (see page 5). At the same time, continued growth in homelessness and a limited supply of shelter and housing resources have contributed to an increase in the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.



Homelessness Response System (HRS) Flow

The PIT Count also reflects a broader system flow reality. Each year, the homelessness response system helps thousands of households successfully exit homelessness through shelter, diversion, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other interventions. Many programs across King County continue to produce strong housing and stabilization outcomes, demonstrating that the system is working for many people once they are connected to the right intervention. However, more households continue to be displaced into homelessness annually than the current system can provide long-term solutions for.

Approximately 25,000 households are active in the Homelessness Response System in a given year.



Sustained inflow, limited affordable housing availability, and constrained shelter capacity continue to drive net growth in unsheltered homelessness across the region.

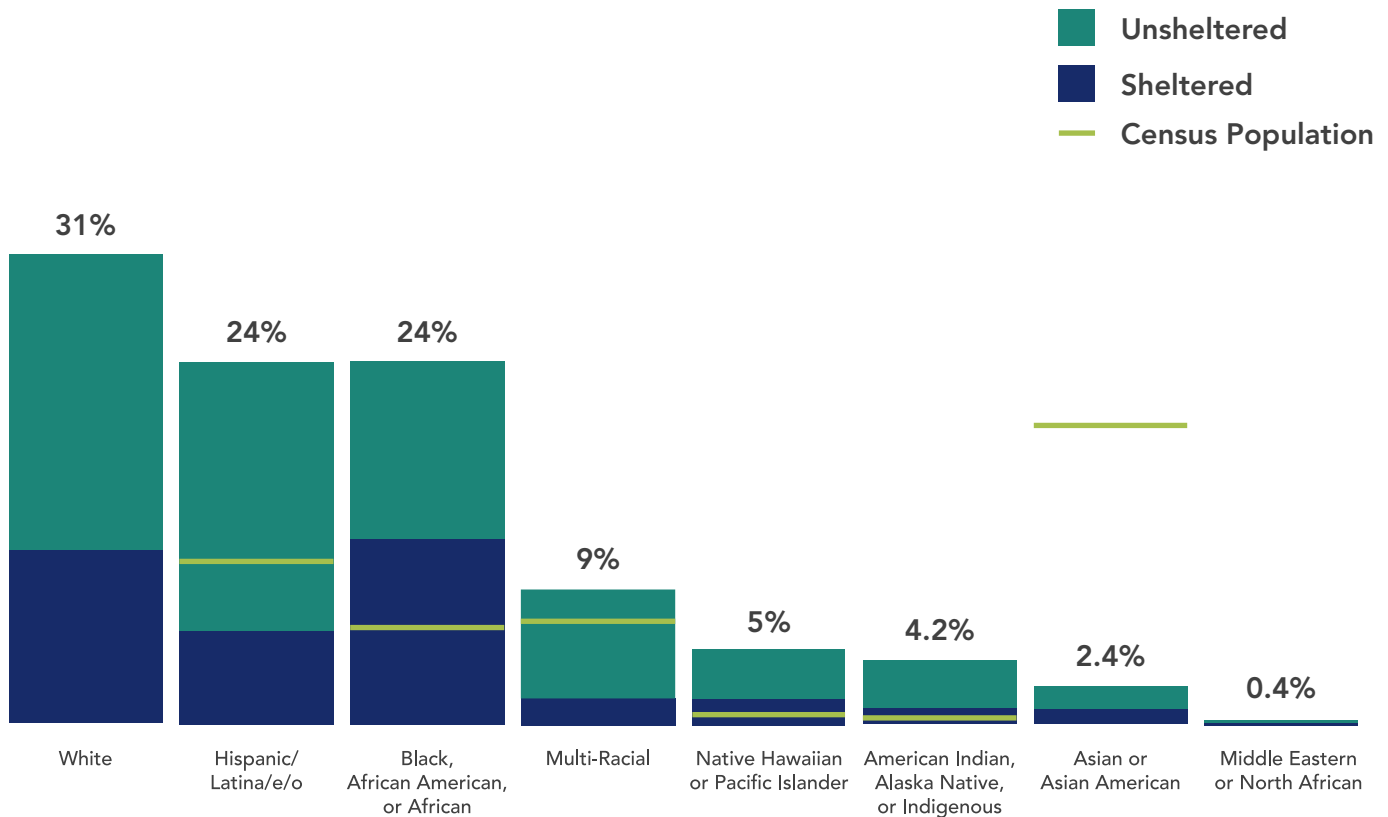


Race & Ethnicity

Homelessness continues to disproportionately affect communities of color in King County. It is important to recognize that homelessness is an outcome of structural racism and racial inequities.

We continue to see over-representation of individuals who identify as: Hispanic/Latina/e/o, Black/African American/African, Multi-Racial, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native/Indigenous experiencing homelessness compared to census-based population estimates in King County.⁴

Race and Ethnicity by Proportion and Shelter Status, 2026



Note: For 2026, we have adjusted our methodology for reporting race and ethnicity, particularly with respect to those who identify as Multi-Racial and Hispanic/Latina/o; additional details will be provided in our comprehensive report.

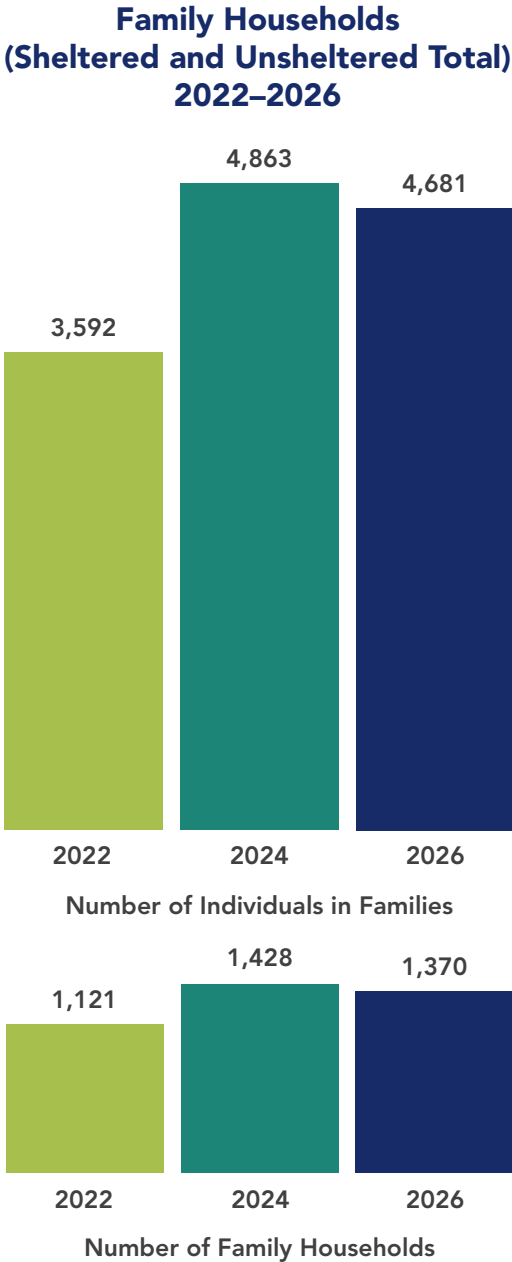
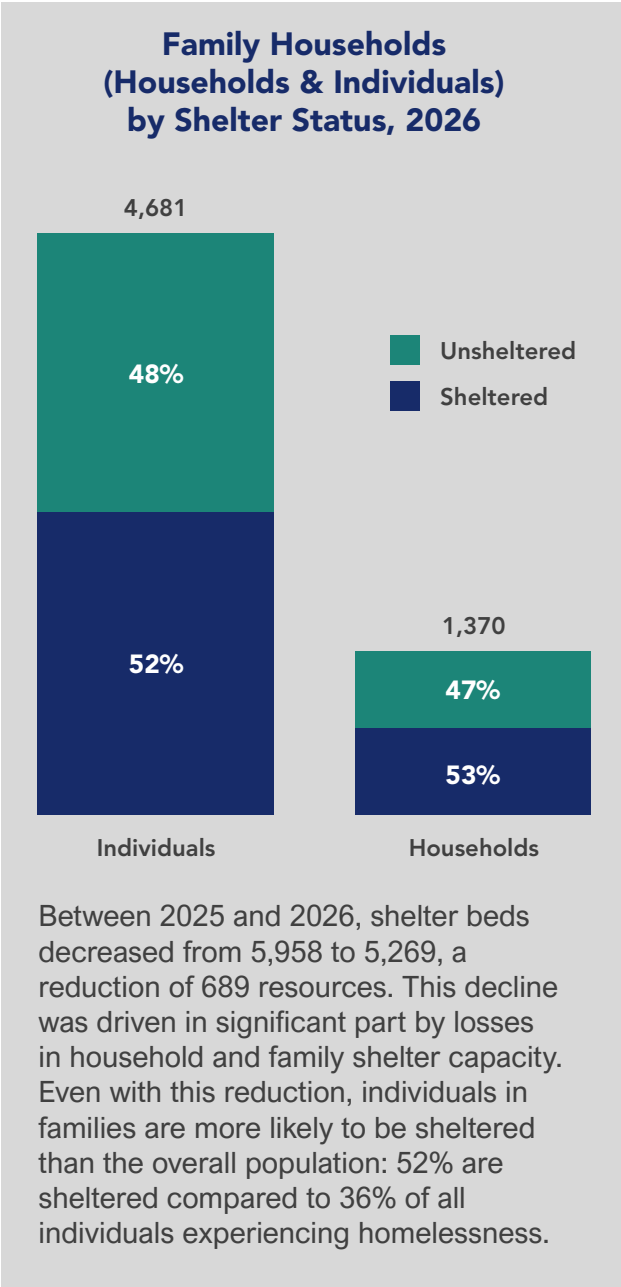
King County Census Population share: 54.4% white, 10.8% Hispanic/Latina/e/o, 6.4% Black, African American or African, 6.9% Multi-Racial, 0.7% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous, 19.7% Asian or Asian American, American Community Survey Census Reference (2025) is not available for Middle Eastern or North African



Family Homelessness

Homelessness interventions are often organized by household type and age, including households with minor children. The charts below show both the estimated number of people in households with minor children, and the estimated number of family households that were homeless on the night of the count, either unsheltered or sheltered.

The estimated number of families experiencing homelessness remains elevated, going from 1,428 in 2024 to 1,370 in 2026.⁵ Unsheltered family homelessness has increased since 2022—from 1,253 individuals in 415 households to 2,224 individuals in 647 households in 2026.



Additional Vulnerabilities & Communities

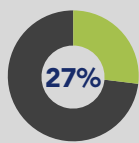
Experiencing homelessness is traumatic and can trigger, create, or exacerbate health conditions, disability, substance use disorder, and mental and behavioral health conditions. At the same time, homelessness can make it harder to access treatment and care.

Individuals self-reported their vulnerabilities, and may be represented in more than one group. This analysis includes the overall proportion of the population experiencing a particular vulnerability and the breakdown by shelter status.

The graphics below show the estimated proportions of individuals⁶ in the 2026 PIT Count who self-reported the following vulnerabilities by unsheltered individuals (11,829), sheltered individuals (6,536), and overall individuals (18,365).

Survivors of Domestic Violence

Of the overall population of people experiencing homelessness, 15% of them are survivors of domestic violence (DV). Among those who are unsheltered, 18% have experienced DV. Of those who are sheltered, 8% have experienced DV.

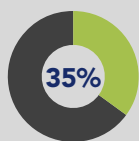


Serious Mental Illness

27% of the overall population experiencing homelessness have a serious mental health condition. This number rises to 31% among those who are unsheltered, and drops to 21% among those who are sheltered.

Substance Use Disorder

33% of the overall population of people experiencing homelessness self-reported having a substance use disorder (SUD). Among those who are unsheltered, this number goes up to 41%. Among those who are sheltered, it drops to 17%.



Chronic Homelessness

Overall, 35% of those experiencing homelessness report being chronically homeless. This number goes up to 38% among those who are unsheltered, and drops to 28% among those who are sheltered.

Veterans

Of the overall population of people experiencing homelessness, 5% are self-reported veterans. This number raises to 6% for those who are unsheltered, and drops to 3% among those who are sheltered.



Housing Inventory Count 2026

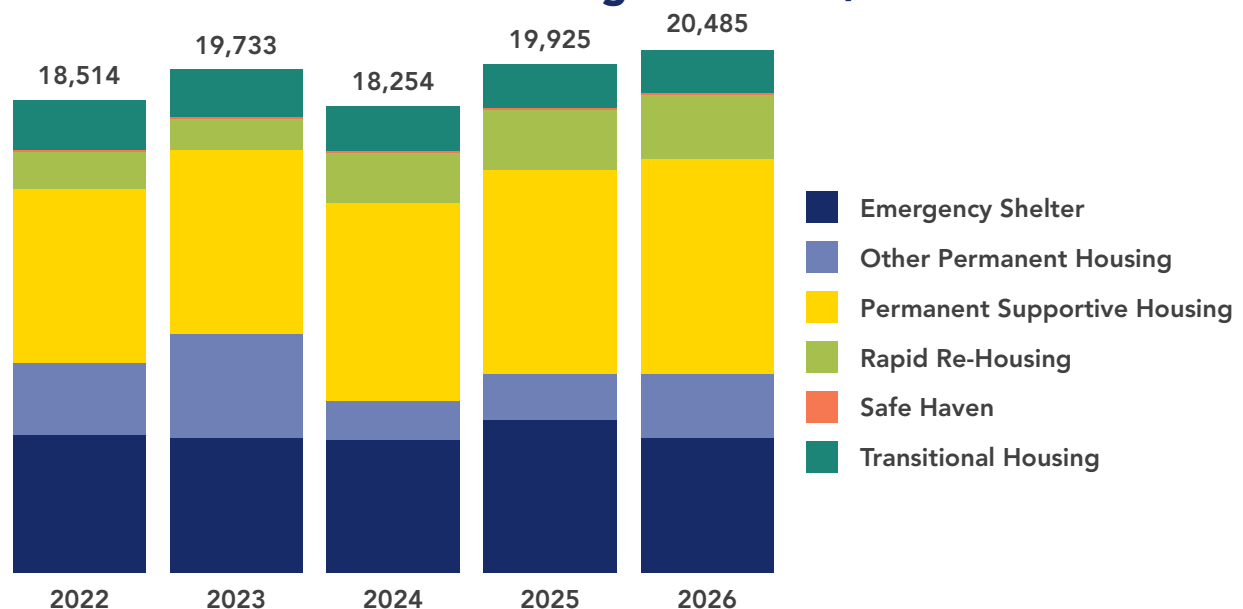
What Resources Exist in the Homelessness Response System?

The Homelessness Response System (HRS) includes shelter and housing resources operated by community providers throughout King County. These resources are measured annually through the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), which provides a snapshot of available shelter and housing capacity across the region.

Overall, HRS inventory has grown in recent years, particularly permanent housing resources, including Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH). However, emergency shelter capacity has remained relatively flat while homelessness has continued to increase. Shelter and emergency resources include Transitional Housing (TH), Emergency Shelter (ES), and Safe Haven (SH).

Even with growth in housing inventory, demand continues to outpace available resources. Occupancy remained high at 94% on the night of the count, indicating that most shelter and housing programs were operating near capacity. While overall inventory has expanded over time, particularly in permanent housing, available resources remain insufficient to meet current levels of need.

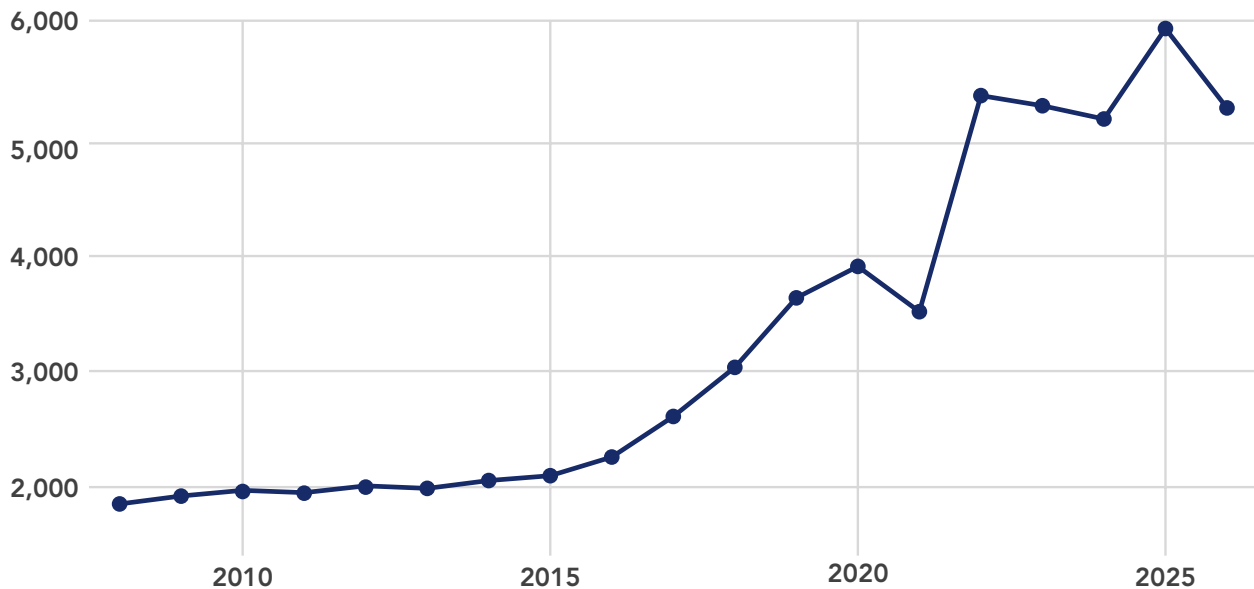
Shelter and HRS Housing Resources, 2022–2026



Shelter and Emergency Resources

When comparing emergency shelter resources to the number of people who may need shelter, King County currently has approximately one shelter bed for every three people experiencing homelessness. In addition, shelter utilization was over 93% on the night of the HIC, indicating that available beds were operating near capacity.

Emergency Shelter Beds Over Time⁷

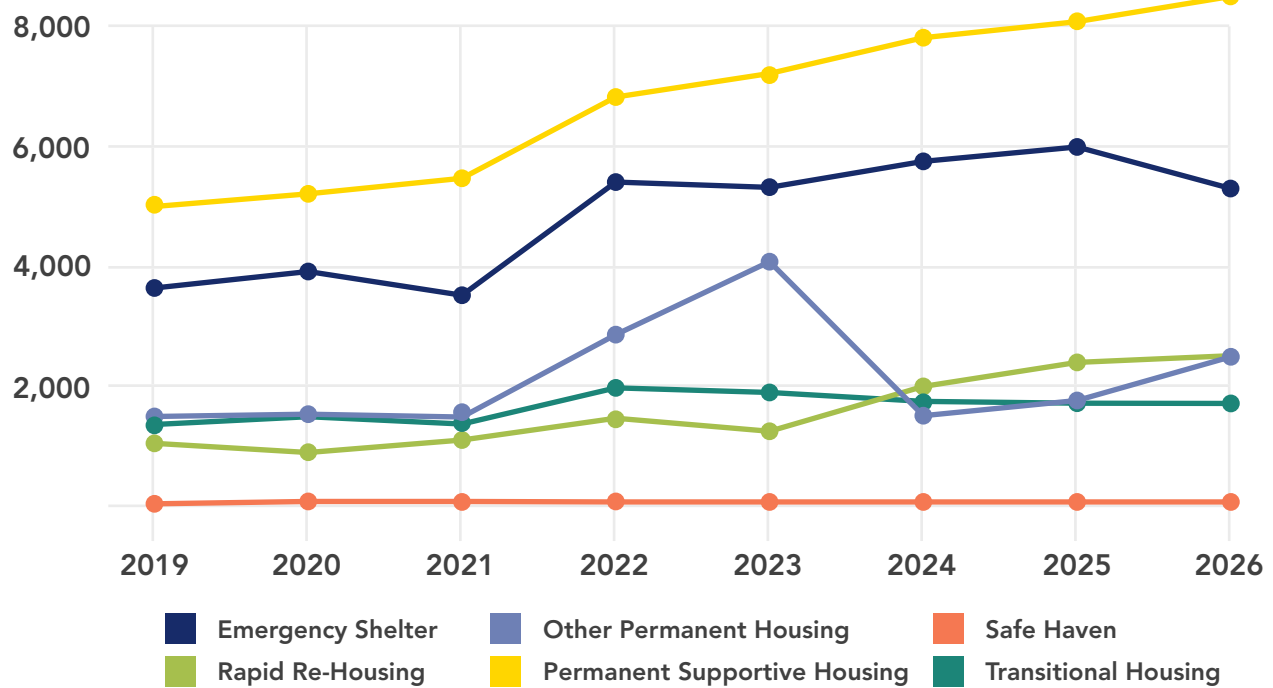


The community continues to respond to the need. In 2025, there were 1,609 privately funded emergency shelter and transitional housing beds (21% of the system) and in 2026 it was 1,413 beds or 20% of all emergency shelter and transitional beds. These privately funded beds reflect the important role of community-based and non-governmental partners, but they are not sufficient to meet the scale of need without additional public investment.

Dedicated efforts are underway to increase the number of shelter beds available in Seattle^{8,9} and King County.¹⁰



Shelter and HRS Housing Resources Over Time¹¹



Opening housing programs for those most affected by homelessness is essential. The graph above showcases the growth of housing programs compared to shelter and other emergency resources.

In 2026, the community plans on opening 155 units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for single adults and families. That's in addition to the 561 PSH units that opened in 2025.

Next Steps & Acknowledgements

Stay updated by [subscribing to KCRHA emails](#), or follow us on social media on these platforms: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Threads](#). Stay tuned for the comprehensive report later this year.

We are deeply grateful to the thousands of people who participated in the 2026 Point-in-Time count survey for sharing their time, experiences, and perspectives. Their contributions help our region better understand homelessness and the supports needed to move more people toward safety, stability, and housing. We also thank the interviewers, service providers, host cities, community partners, and KCRHA staff whose work made the 2026 Point-in-Time Count possible. **We appreciate you.**

Footnotes

1. The [Point in Time \(PIT\)](#) Count is required by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) every year for shelter data and every other year for both shelter and unsheltered data. Sheltered data is collected on January 29, 2026 from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and provider surveys.
2. The [Housing Inventory Count \(HIC\)](#) is required by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collected using the Homeless Management Information System collected on January 29, 2026 and provider surveys.
3. For 2026, 2024, 2022 the unsheltered portion was led by the University of Washington using Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) methodology was used for data collection and generation of the estimates. In 2026 we surveyed at nearly 30 different locations with over 150 community volunteers.
4. U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DPO5: Total Population. Retrieved from data.census.gov.
5. These figures represent the total of households with at least one adult and one child. Households are defined as cohabitating groups.
6. Totals includes individuals either in shelter or unsheltered age 18 or over who self-reported.
7. Increased number of shelter beds from 2021 to 2022 due to several factors notable the inclusion of Tiny Home Villages in the HIC report for the first time as well as increase of federal resources due to COVID-19 response.
8. Seattle Times. (May 6, 2026). Seattle City Council moves to expand homeless shelter site sizes. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/seattle-city-council-moves-to-expand-homeless-shelter-site-sizes/>
9. Seattle Times. (April 16, 2026). Seattle council approves bills to speed up shelter construction. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/seattle-council-approves-bills-to-speed-up-shelter-construction/>
10. Breaking the Cycle King County Executive Order No:ACO-8-34-EO. March 31, 2026. https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WAKING/2026/03/31/file_attachments/3602521/Breaking%20the%20Cycle%20Executive%20Order%20Final.pdf
11. Federal Permanent Housing voucher resources (included in the “Other Permanent Housing” category) increased during 2021 to 2024 due to COVID-19 response.

