



# Homelessness, Housing & Human Services Issue Brief

**Support and enhance responses to increase affordable housing, decrease homelessness, and improve a strained mental and behavioral health system**

Urban and rural cities throughout the state are grappling with increasing homeless populations, lack of affordable housing, and a poorly-funded mental health and substance abuse system. After many years of decline, 2013 saw an increase in homeless populations for many of Washington's cities and towns. Cities are struggling to solve these issues with limited resources. Together with the state, counties, and nonprofit partners, we support current efforts to develop new strategies that address the issues plaguing our human service, homeless, and affordable housing systems.

## Strong cities need:

 **Eliminate the sunset and increase the document recording fee.** This fee on real estate transactions provides the bulk of state funding for homelessness programs at the state and local levels, and faces a 60% reduction if allowed to sunset in 2019. The sunset must be eliminated and the fee increased to expand investments in homelessness assistance.

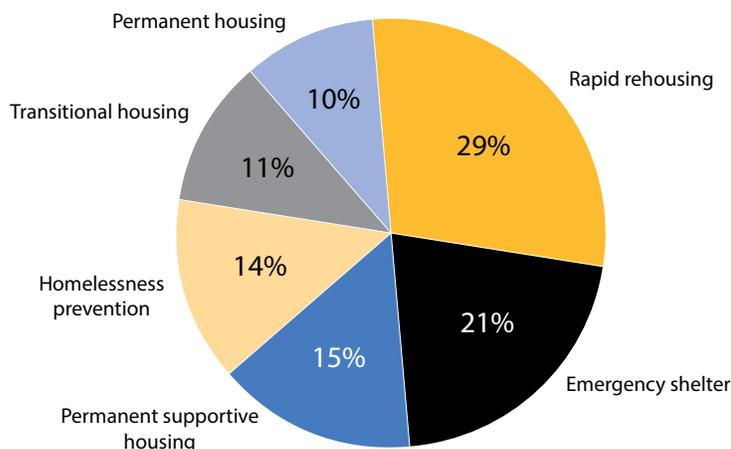
 **Make a \$200 million investment in the Housing Trust Fund,** the preeminent tool in the state to fund capital construction of affordable housing across the state.

 **Ensure full Operating Budget authority to allow the state to maximize federal resources through the Medicaid Waiver** which authorizes funding for permanent supportive housing with Medicaid dollars.

 **Provide additional resources for mental health and chemical dependency services,** including coordinated treatment, increasing treatment beds, support for step-down services and programs for transient drug populations.

 **Create new local options to generate revenue for homeless services and for capital construction of affordable housing,** and improve standing options to make implementation easier.

**The document recording fee pays for essential homeless and housing programs**



Source: WA Department of Commerce report "Homelessness in Washington State" (2015).

**After years of decline, there is now double-digit growth in unsheltered homeless**



Source: WA Department of Commerce "Point In Time Counts", 2006-2015.

## Contact:

**Jane Wall**  
Government Relations Advocate  
janew@awcnet.org

**Carl Schroeder**  
Government Relations Advocate  
carls@awcnet.org

**Logan Bahr**  
Government Relations Analyst  
loganb@awcnet.org

