

Appendix 1: Long-term, affordable, quality housing

Situational overview

Olympic Community of Health (OCH) believes that all people deserve to live with dignity. Access to long-term, affordable, and quality housing is one of the most important determinants of health. With a vision of healthy people, thriving communities, OCH has prioritized housing as one of four focus areas beginning in 2022. Housing is a complex issue that no single sector or Tribe can tackle alone. Regional partners can strengthen their approach by collaborating on solutions catered to the unique housing needs of each community, county, and Tribe, while leaning on each other’s expertise, perspective, and skills. Together, we can create positive outcomes with collaborative, innovative, upstream, place-based solutions.

Background

Housing instability encompasses challenges including trouble paying rent/mortgage, overcrowding, moving frequently, spending a bulk of income on housing, and homelessness. There is an affordable housing shortfall and a small percentage of vacant homes in the Olympic region. Looking at fair market value for rentals, each county in the region rates as “very high” compared to the national average and more expensive than most of the state of Washington.¹

At a glance: 2020 housing across the Olympic region	Clallam	Jefferson	Kitsap	WA State	Data Year
Population ²	71,404	29,872	251,133	NA	2020
Median household income ³	\$49,913	\$54,471	\$71,610	\$78,687	2020
Vacant houses ⁴	1.1%	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	2020
Poverty rate ⁵	15.9%	13.3%	9.7%	9.8%	2020
Individuals experiencing homelessness ⁶	198	139	524	NA	2020
Unemployment rate ⁷	6.8%	6.1%	4.9%	4.8%	2017
Households spending over 30% of income on housing ⁸	32.7%	32.7%	33.9%	33.9%	2012-2016

Clallam

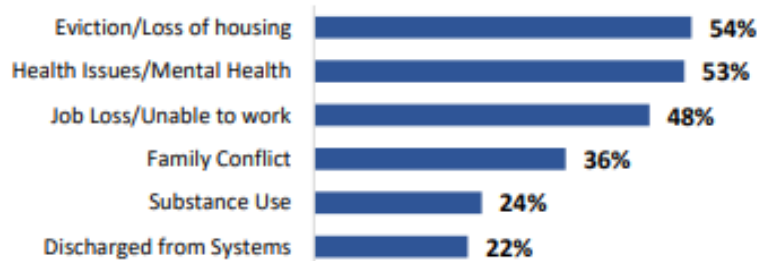
The major causal factors for homelessness in Clallam are related to safe housing availability: low vacancy rates, high rental rates, low average salaries, and limited available affordable housing stock⁹. 35% of county residents live below 200% of the poverty level.

Jefferson

The county has an emergency-level lack of access to affordable housing for low-income households since 2017. Among those who are counted, children, the elderly, and veterans in Jefferson are disproportionately homeless. As of 2018, about 25% of all units were vacant for part of the year. These units are likely second or vacation homes. The increase of higher income residents creates rural gentrification, which widens income inequality and increases population turnover.¹⁰

Kitsap

Home values are steadily increasing while the housing inventory is decreasing.¹¹ Kitsap County is expected to need an additional 1,480 units per year, exceeding the current building rate of 515 per year.¹² The 2020 Kitsap Count Point in Time report notes 199 unsheltered individuals, a 15% increase from 2019. The most common responses to the cause of homelessness:



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Examples of current efforts

Organization	County	Program/Project Description
Makah Tribe	Clallam	The newly established Village of Hope, located on the Makah Indian Reservation, is a group of tiny homes and some older FEMA trailers that are being utilized to house Neah Bay's homeless population.
Dove House	Jefferson	Dove House provides housing for those experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, sexual assault, mental illness, addiction, general crimes, and other sources of trauma. Dove House offers one-to-one advocacy, therapy, and support to those recovering and also offers transitional housing to women and families called the Recovery Cafe.
Peninsula Housing Authority	Jefferson & Clallam	Peninsula Housing Authority provides long-term rentals, rental subsidies, and homeownership programs in Jefferson and Clallam Counties. These section 8 housing options are available to low-income families in the area.
Olympic Community Action Programs	Jefferson & Clallam	Olympic Community Action Programs provides residents of Jefferson and Clallam Counties with rental assistance, deposit assistance, and mortgage assistance.
St. Vincent de Paul	Kitsap	St. Vincent de Paul provides housing, food, and safety for women and children at their Birkenfeld-Stella Maris House. Once ready, they assist in finding safe shelter and provide rent and utility deposits and transitioning expenses to covered at no cost to them.
Coffee Oasis	Kitsap	Coffee Oasis helps support teens by providing job opportunities and housing for youth in Kitsap County.
Olympic Community of Health	Clallam, Jefferson, & Kitsap	OCH has taken the first steps in creating an inventory of local projects addressing determinants of health. This tool is intended to be used as a source of creative inspiration and situational awareness.

Major gaps

- People re-entering the community from systems of care:** People are frequently discharged from other systems of care, such as jails, hospitals, behavioral health programs, substance disorder treatment and foster care, into homelessness due to the lack of housing options.

- **Affordable housing shortage:** Severely cost-burdened households pay more than half their monthly income on rent. Prospective homeowners are also impacted by the lack of affordable housing.
- **Additional missing systems:** Engagement must be catered specifically for the needs of different cultures and experiences (programs specifically addressing extended care, veterans housing, safe and stable housing, and mental health services for youth of color and LGBTQ+ community members).
- **Health workforce shortage:** The housing shortage in all three counties impacts the local health workforce. Without quality and affordable housing options within a reasonable commute, the workforce is not supported in a way that allows them to effectively meet the health needs of the region.

Examples of activities

- Create an inventory of projects and funding across the region to identify gaps, maximize current efforts, build capacity, and expand partnerships
- Collaborate to create a region-wide housing plan
- Serve as an innovation center hub for funding and pilot projects
- Incorporate key elements of behavioral health, care coordination, and primary care services into congregate living settings
- Collaborate with the health care and social services sectors to support additional recovery, supportive, and transitional housing for those in recovery for substance use disorder or serious mental illness
- Data collection and evaluation to determine what, where, and how to scale and sustain promising solutions
- Leverage regional-reach to collaboratively advocate

References

- ¹ Olympic Community of Health. (2021). *Olympic Region Behavioral Health Report*. https://ea40b83f-bff5-4a61-aa55-a97621e13e64.usrfiles.com/uqd/ea40b8_4348718198b743b88c9804f199a78c91.pdf
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- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Department of Commerce. (2020). *2020 Point in Time Count, State Totals*. <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/ek9pu2w07oz8d77ga6c1rlpxuwcw0515/file/777523318087>
- ⁷ Olympic Community of Health. (2020). *Transforming & Advancing the Social Determinants of Health in the Olympic Region*. https://2f7b4411-f7f6-4d37-bfcb-6d23ced1c9b7.filesusr.com/uqd/ea40b8_0e2e14791cba424bac1614f07878201e.pdf
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Clallam County Charter Review Recommendation. (2020, September 16). Clallam County Charter Review Commission Recommendation to Meet All Housing Needs by Creating Permanent Housing. <http://www.clallam.net/bocc/documents/websitelink-Housing.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Smith, Helena. (2021, May 4). *Housing Jefferson County During the COVID-19 Pandemic*.
- ¹¹ Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners. (2020, Aug 21). *Kitsap Housing Supply is in Crisis: "Housing Affordability" vs. "Affordable Housing"*. <https://kitsapalliance.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/kitsap-housing-crisis.pdf>
- ¹² ECONorthwest. (2020, March). *City of Bremerton & Kitsap County Affordable Housing Recommendations Report*. <https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/HOUSINGBLOCK/Kitsap%20AH%20Recommendations%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>
- ¹³ Derenburger, Cory. Kitsap County Department of Human Services (2020, March 4). *Kitsap County Point in Time Count Overview*. <https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/HOUSINGBLOCK/2020%20Kitsap%20County%20PIT%20Overview%20-%20Preliminary.pdf>