

**The 2004 Annual
One Night Count :
People surviving homelessness in
King County, Washington**



**Prepared by the
Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless
with funding assistance from:
King County Housing and Community Development Program
City of Seattle Human Services Department
United Way of King County Out of the Rain Homelessness Initiative**

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Acknowledgments

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We are, as ever, deeply grateful to the providers who, in the midst of their work to shelter people who have no homes, took the time and perseverance to complete a lengthy survey on the night of the count. The survey was made possible by the efforts of the Survey Administration, Colleen Meadows.

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Preface

October 2004's *One Night Count* took place while several significant milestones relating to homeless also occurring:

- ❖ Homeless stakeholders and advocates were finding strong allies and challengers in their struggle to find a home for Tent City 4 in King County. A Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments (CACHE), whose members were appointed by King County Executive Ron Sims, had just released a report which found a need for homeless encampments primarily because current regional efforts are inadequate to meet the needs of homeless men, women and families.
- ❖ The Committee to End Homelessness in King County was only several months away from launching a Plan to End Homelessness to the community, and to asking that community to embrace a proposal to end homelessness rather than continue to apply the proverbial bandage.
- ❖ The King County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Safe Harbors, was being piloted by several agencies, with the promise of a more responsive human services system stemming from a better understanding of the extent of the crisis.

These events provide an important context for presenting the data in this report, and for describing the future of the One Night Count.

The Street Count has been carried out for 25 years, and is a valuable instrument for understanding the trends, details, and extent of homelessness in our area. The count will continue to be extended to new localities and has the potential to serve as one evaluative component on the progress of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

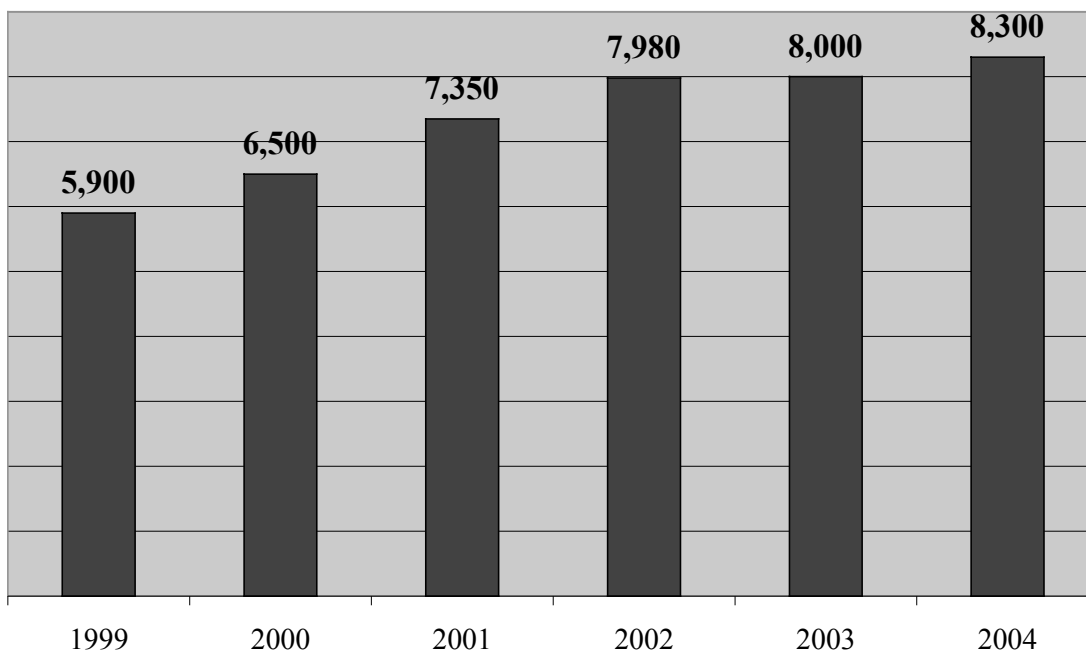
As Safe Harbors assumes the task of gathering information relating to the people utilizing homeless services, the One Night Count Survey will not be repeated by SKCCH in the foreseeable future. For the last 8 years, comprehensive demographic and etiological data has been provided by the service agency staff, and yearly this data has been analyzed for trends. Over time findings have not varied to any significant extent: people of color continue to be over-represented in the homeless population; the highest factors contributing to homelessness continue to relate to economic poverty; a quarter of people who are surviving homelessness are employed; nearly half of all single adult homeless are experiencing at least one disability. From 2005, this data collection and analyses will be accomplished by Safe Harbors' HMIS. SKCCH will continue to conduct the One Night Street Count because it provides valuable information about people who are not receiving or accessing shelter or transitional housing services.

Introduction

From the findings of the 2004 One Night Count, the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH) is able to estimate that there are at least 8,300 people who are homeless in King County, Washington.

On October 22, 2004 SKCCH conducted its 26th Annual One Night Count which included a street count and a survey of homeless shelters and transitional programs within King County. While this yearly event does not assert to pinpoint the exact number of people who are homeless, it seeks to track trends over time and analyze demographic data.

Estimated Number of People Homeless on Any Given Night



The 2004 One Night Count consisted of a:

- *Street Count* which was conducted in limited parts of Seattle, Kent, White Center, North King County, and Eastside-Urban King County and a
- comprehensive *Survey of emergency shelter and transitional programs* throughout King County

This year we estimate that at a minimum of 8,300 people are homeless on any given night. The survey of shelters and transitional programs found 4,636 people utilizing services on the night of the One Night Count. The Street Count found 2,216 people surviving outside without shelter. In addition, it is estimated that at least 1,484 people are living unsheltered in the balance of King County.

2004 One Night Count Data	Total Individuals	2004 Shelter & Transitional Programs	Unsheltered - 2004 Street Count	Unsheltered - Balance of County
Single Adults	5,634	2,566	2,118	950
Families (as individuals)	2,360	1,900	n/a	460
Youth under 18	146	63	56	27
Young Adults 18-25	196	107	42	47
Total Individuals	8,336	4,636	2,216	1,484

Source: Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless

The comprehensive report that follows provides current, unduplicated numbers relating to individuals who are homeless in King County. The data is from the October 22, 2004 One Night Count organized by the Seattle King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH).

Street Count

The Seattle-King County homeless street count was conceived by Operation Nightwatch, an active member of SKCCH. It consists of a ‘moment in time’ unduplicated tally of people living on the street in: downtown and outlying neighborhoods of Seattle and, in recent years, areas within the City of Kent and North King County. In 2004, White Center and areas in East King County were added to the count. The Coalition hopes to continue expanding the boundaries of the street count in order to provide a more accurate depiction of homelessness in King County.

Because homeless people go to great lengths to hide themselves from view in an effort to survive another night, the street count does not reflect the exact number of people unsheltered in our County. By design, the Street Count does not capture data about people living in abandoned buildings, sleeping on private property, or people who have managed to find some security hidden deep within ‘greenbelts’. Given this, the count is intended to foster an understanding of the patterns of survival for people who sleep in publicly accessible areas.

Shelter and Transitional Housing Survey

The annual One Night Count also includes a survey of Seattle-King County’s sheltered homeless community. This component of the 2004 count was carried out by the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH), with financial support from SKCCH membership, City of Seattle Human Services Department, King County Housing and Community Development Program, and United Way of King County. The survey, which is conducted on the same night as

the Street Count, produces unduplicated data on people utilizing homeless services at a given point in time. The staff of homeless programs complete a six-page survey which offers a profile of people who are homeless staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Safe Havens, as well as those utilizing motel voucher programs throughout King County on that particular night. Over time the data has helped to identify trends in service use and provision.

It must be emphasized that the information reported in the survey solely reflects the number of individuals and households receiving service at a targeted program at one particular point in time and does not reflect individuals in the homeless community who are not accessing services on that night. Neither the survey nor the count includes people who are homeless and have the opportunity to find respite from the streets for a few nights by staying on the couch with friends or relatives. Nor does this effort seek to depict the people living in substandard housing, nor the many families that are secretly doubled or tripled up on a permanent basis in one unit.

Data: Street Count

This year's **street count found a total of 2,216 people** living on the streets in the count areas of Seattle and King County. This included: 2,055 people found in traditional count areas, and another 161 people in two new count areas (East County-Urban and White Center).

The following table indicates the number of people living homeless on the streets of King County who were counted during the Annual Street Count for the years of 1998 through 2004. The large proportion of 'unknown' is due to the fact that it is often difficult to determine the gender of an individual who is clothed and covered to survive the night outside.

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>
Men (adult)	892	797	920	718	515	451	420
Women (adult)	171	172	163	129	83	93	64
Gender unknown (adult)	1097	879	918	528	433	417	297
Minor (< 18)	<u>56</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	2,216	1,899	2,040	1454	1085	983	784

The number of homeless individuals seen on the streets on October 22, 2004 increased by 8%, as compared with corresponding geographical areas in 2003.

The areas where individuals and families sleep appear to be increasingly related to the spread of homelessness into suburban areas. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people who are homeless are leaving the downtown Seattle core and seeking refuge in the suburban cities. The percentage of people surviving homelessness by living in a parked vehicle has grown steadily over the past 5 years. Inhabited vehicles are seen in suburban areas rather than the urban core of cities where parking 24 hours a day would present a problem.

Where people were found during the One Night Street Count 1998 – 2004

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>
Benches	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%
Parking garages	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Vehicle (est. 2)	30%	31%	23%	22%	20%	16%	15%
Under road/bridges	11%	7%	9%	15%	11%	15%	20%
Doorways	5%	11%	8%	11%	13%	14%	13%
City Park	3%	1%	3%	5%	3%	9%	9%
Greenbelt	3%	4%	8%	3%	2%	5%	3%
Bus Stops	1%	2%	2%	2%	5%	2%	3%
Alleys	2%	6%	2%	6%	3%	5%	5%
Walking w/ no destination	18%	15%	15%	17%	15%	---	---
Structures	11%	13%	13%	---	---	---	---
Other	13%	8%	16%	19%	25%	28%	29%

Data: Shelter and Transitional Housing Survey

On October 22, 2004, 4,636 unduplicated persons who were homeless accessed shelters and transitional programs in Seattle and King County. Over time new programs have opened and some have closed or significantly changed their service model. Whenever possible, efforts have been made to maintain consistency in classification and reporting.

Individuals by Household Type	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Couples with children	576	658	717	796	819	635
Couples without children	22	22	30	22	8	22
Adult women with children	1,227	1,328	1,322	1,339	1,406	1,236
Teen women (18 & under) w/child	49	22	39	30	36	45
Adult men with children	97	79	88	90	71	84
Single women	666	610	612	682	482	482
Single men	1,936	1,822	1,815	1,489	1,630	1,415
Minor alone (under 18)	63	70	52	46	43	46
Unknown	0	6		20	5	0
Information not monitored	0			157	0	0
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	4,636	4,617	4,675	4,671	4,500	3,965

This year's survey found a total of 3,285 households (comprised of 4,636 individuals) accessing services. This figure includes couples with no children, teen parents, single and dual parent households, single adults, and some extended family situations. 83% of all households were accessing programs located in the City of Seattle.

Households by Program Location	Total	Seattle	King County (excluding Seattle)
Couples with children	123	67	56
Couples without children	11	10	1
Adult women with children	436	230	206
Teen women (18 & under) w/child	22	15	7
Adult men with children	19	5	14
Single women	666	568	98
Single men	1,936	1,803	133
Minor alone (under 18)	63	26	37
Unknown	9	9	0
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	3,285	2,733	552

Age

Gender	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
Females	39%	42%	41%	47%	43%	42%	38%
Males	61%	58%	59%	53%	57%	58%	62%
Transgender*	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Information was reported on 11 transgender people accessing services. The 2003 survey reported data on 5 transgender people.

Individuals by Age	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
0-5 yrs.	11%	13%	12%	15%	16%	13%
6-12 yrs.	9%	10%	11%	13%	12%	13%
13-17 yrs.	7%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%
Subtotal 0-17	27%	30%	31%	36%	34%	34%
18-25 yrs.	10%	10%	12%	11%	10%	8%
26-59 yrs.	58%	55%	53%	49%	46%	48%
60-84 yrs.	5%	5%	4%	4%	10%	9%
85 and older	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Race/Ethnicity

The One Night Count survey data indicates that the disparity between the racial composition of the general population and that of people utilizing homeless services has continued to grow. People of color are clearly over represented in the homeless community, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders. This data is consistent with the One Night Count figures from the last three years. The table below shows the comparison of the racial composition of the population at-large versus those who are experiencing homelessness. The percentages are calculated excluding unknowns.

Race / Ethnicity in King County (including Seattle)

	General Population *	Homeless Population
Caucasian	80%	43%
African American/African	5%	33%
Native American	1%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10%	4%
Hispanic	3%	10%
Multi-racial	n/a	6%

*2000 US Census

The chart below provides a retrospective comparison at the race/ethnicity of people utilizing homeless programs in King County. It should be noted that the category of multi-racial was added for the 2001 survey (previously these individuals were included in the category 'other'). The percentages are calculated excluding unknowns.

Race/Ethnicity of People Accessing Programs in Seattle-King County	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	3%	5%	4%	6%	5%
Asian	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
African (Ethiopian, Nigerian, Kenya, etc.)	4%	10%	11%	11%	12%	10%
Black or African American	29%	28%	29%	29%	27%	29%
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	11%	10%	9%	11%	9%
White	43%	39%	38%	38%	37%	40%
Multi-Racial	4%	4%	5%	4%	---	---
Other	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	4%

Income

The 2004 survey found fewer people with no income compared with the 2003 and 2002 survey results. The source of income for households remained relatively the same. However, the number of employed households decreased from 26% in 2003 to 22% in 2004.

Amount of Income per Household	2004	2003	2002	2001
Zero Income	25%	34%	34%	20%
Very Low Income (30% MFI)	72%	64%	62%	76%
Low Income (50%MFI)	3%	2%	3%	4%

Primary Source of Household Income	
GAU	12%
ADATSA	1%
SSI	17%
<i>Subtotal disability income 30%</i>	
GA-S (Pregnant Women)	1%
TANF	14%
Employed	22%
Unemployment Compensation	1%
Other Income	4%
No Income	27%

Last Permanent Address

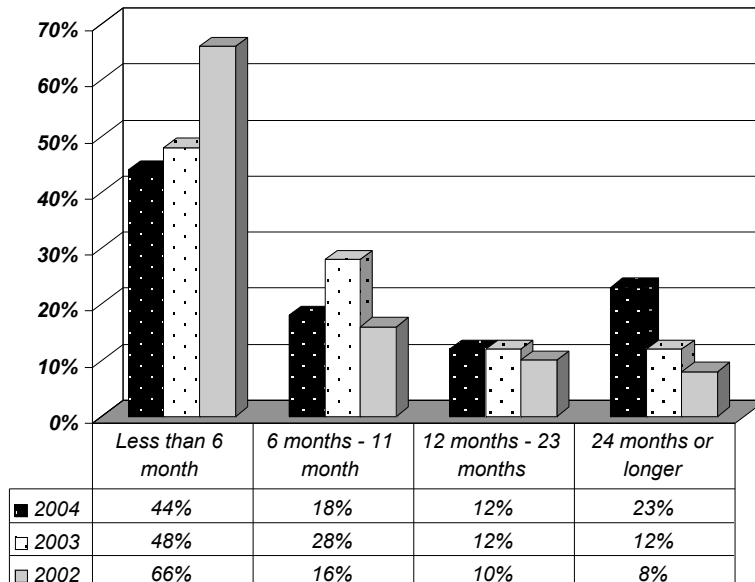
Last Permanent Address of Households Surveyed				
	2004	2003	2002	2001
Seattle	1,117 (56%)	1,046 (52%)	1,131 (51%)	1,220 (50%)
North King County	57 (3%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
East King County	158 (8%)	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>North and East King County*</i>	<i>215 (11%)</i>	<i>232 (11%)</i>	<i>200 (9%)</i>	<i>253 (10%)</i>
South King County	227 (11%)	275 (14%)	292 (13%)	245 (10%)
Washington State (excluding KC)	172 (9%)	137 (7%)	232 (10%)	226 (9%)
Out of State	255 (13%)	338 (17%)	367 (16%)	495 (20%)
Unknown	309	230	177	0
Information not monitored	990	868	738	0
Total Households	3285	3,126	3,137	3,047

* 2004 was the first survey that separated North and East King County

Length of Time and Reoccurrence of Homelessness

According to the survey results 44% of people accessing programs had been homeless for less than six months. The charts below detail the length of time and the number of times people were homeless.

Length of Time Households were Homeless



The majority of households surveyed were experiencing homelessness for the first time in two years.

Reoccurrence of Homelessness	2004	2003	2002
Only time homeless in the past two years	62%	55%	64%
Second time homeless in the past two years	21%	22%	20%
Third time homeless in the past two years	10%	11%	8%
Fourth time homeless in the past two years	6%	12%	7%

Disabilities

According to the One Night Count survey, the most frequently cited disabilities among people who are homeless are mental illness and chemical dependency. Respondents were allowed to identify more than one disability, and this year 1,613 people reported 2,083 disabilities. Several programs do not collect information on disabilities and so it is difficult to use this information to draw conclusions on the percentage people homeless in King County with disabilities. The chart below shows the number of reported disabilities by category for the past four years.

Disability Reported	2004	2003	2002	2001
HIV/AIDS	254	46	64	49
Mental Illness	605	484	588	587
Alcohol / Substance Abuse	573	628	684	693
Developmental Disability	101	62	94	71
Dually Diagnosed	254	248	294	237
Physical Disability	177	291	216	316
Needing Acute/Respite Care	67	79	119	90
Other	52	236	62	236
Number of individuals reporting at least one disability	1,613	1,372	n/a	n/a

Pregnancy

On the night of the count there were 44 pregnant women accessing shelters and transitional programs. Of the 44 women: 5 were in single adult shelters; 13 were in family shelters; 3 were in youth/young adult shelters; 2 were in transitional programs for single adults; 20 were in transitional programs for families; and one was accessing a hotel/motel voucher.

The number of pregnant women accessing services has remained consistent over time. The 2003 and the 2002 surveys both recorded information on 42 pregnant women.

Domestic Violence / Physical Abuse

According to the survey there were 575 people accessing shelter and transitional programs who had experienced violence or abuse within the past year. Of the people who reported experiencing violence: 82% were accessing family programs; 11% were accessing single adult programs; 2% were in youth/young adult programs; and 4% were using motel/hotel vouchers. The format of the questions about domestic violence were changed in 2004 and so this figure can not be compared with previous surveys.

Military

The 2004 survey found 302 people who had served in the military. In addition there were 32 people who identified as the dependent or spouse of a person in the military. 94% of veterans were accessing single adult shelters or transitional programs. The reported number of people in the military has been decreasing in recent years - down from 414 in 2003 and 494 in 2002.

Institutions

Instances of institutional discharge to homelessness	2004	2003	2002
Psychiatric Hospital	84	61	75
Hospital for Physical Illness	69	111	80
Foster Care System	20	33	15
Inpatient Drug / Alcohol Treatment	78	136	141
Jail / Prison or Work Release Facility	134	212	124
Number of people released from at least one institution	309	669	434

The number of people reported to have left an institution was notably different from previous years' data, and was clearly effected by at least two known variables. First, fewer programs gathered this information about their clients. Second, the survey clarified that the person had to have been released from an institution within the past year. There was some questions in previous years' surveys about the time frame.

The Human Element

“When we look at the numbers, we need to remember the faces too.”

*Rick Reynolds, Exec. Director of Operation Nightwatch and
Founder of the One Night Count*

Each year, as volunteer counters de-brief after the Street Count, a common theme permeates the morning: people feel deeply effected by what they have witnessed, and express a renewed commitment to seeing the end to homelessness. Volunteers who have experienced homelessness, or who are service providers, business-people, government employees, faith leaders - all share feelings of disbelief, frustration, sorrow, and/or anger after witnessing the violence of poverty and lack of privilege.

On the back of the Street Count tally form, counters are given the opportunity to ‘tell the story’ of their experience. In this year’s report, we have chosen to share some of those descriptions with the reader, in order to share the face – the humanity – of the homeless condition.

- *Most of the homeless were asleep in a car – or down by the docks in doorway nooks. We were unable to tell gender due to blankets, and not wanting to startle or wake them up.....humbling*
- *I was frightened until I came to the make-shift tent – there was a sense of community, a sense of peoples’ homes, even though it was under the freeway*
- *There were two young people..... a backpack, a bike, a skateboard*
- *a caravan-type set-up...9 vehicles with people obviously living in each – probably clustered for safety reasons*
- *with the tent-like structures and household items, it looked like a secure little community*
- *woman sleeping in open field next to the freeway ramp – very vulnerable*
- *a single woman, middle-aged....looking to find a shelter with directions she had been given. She was nervous and concerned for her safety. She had been hurt on the street before- stabbed by a needle --- had been raped. She asked why no one was interested in helping her. She...left us still feeling very nervous and unsafe, saying “If you find me murdered, remember my face“*
- *an occupied car...with a disabled sticker*
- *We saw a person sleeping in the doorway of a church*
- *saw a pink, child’s sleeping bag...*
- *Someone was sleeping on the concrete public bathroom floor at the park*
- *a person wrapped in one of those foil emergency survival bags*
- *Behind the motel it looks like somebody made a little camp ground...found a toiletry kit*
- *People are sleeping in the doorways of abandoned housing*
- *I will never forget --- when I drive on the freeway --- that I am driving over someone’s bedroom*

Concluding Summary

The point-in-time findings of the 2004 One Night Count, indicate that there are at least 8,300 people who are homeless in King County, Washington.

We can be certain that, on October 22, 2004 there were 4,636 homeless individuals in shelters or transitional programs in our region. In addition, 2,216 women, men and children were sleeping or wandering outdoors --- unsheltered --- solely in the areas of the County selected for the count. It is estimated that at least 1,500 persons were living, unsheltered, in the balance of the county.

In the 2004 Street Count, there was an **8% increase** in the number of people found without shelter when comparing traditional count areas. The increase in the total number of homeless people counted over the past five years corresponds specifically to the growing numbers from the unsheltered Street Count. In other words, the majority of this increase consists of people who are without safe overnight accommodation.

The Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless is deeply concerned about the growing evidence of people struggling to survive outside in inhumane conditions. It is hoped that this point-in-time depiction of homelessness in King County will assist in “building and sustaining political will and community support” to end homelessness as stated in the region’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

SKCCH has provided an active voice in the Committee to End Homelessness in King County and is energized by our release of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County. SKCCH membership will continue to play an integral part in ending homelessness as we move forward with the implementation of the plan.

Additional Resources

King County

Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless, www.homelessinfo.org

Committee to End Homelessness In King County, www.ceh.org

Crisis Clinic, www.crisisclinic.org

City of Seattle, www.seattle.gov/humanservices/homeless.htm

King County, www.metrokc.gov/dchs/csd/Housing/Index.htm

United Way of King County Out of the Rain Initiative,
www.unitedwayofkingcounty.org/ourcommunity/initiatives/outoftherain

Washington State Websites

Washington State Office of Community Development, <http://www.cted.wa.gov>

Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, www.EndHomelessnessWA.org

Housing Development Consortium, www.hdc-kingcounty.org

National Websites

- National Alliance to End Homelessness, www.naeh.org
- National Coalition for the Homeless, www.nationalhomeless.org
- National Housing Trust Fund, www.nhtf.org
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development, www.hud.gov
- US Conference of Mayors, www.usmayors.org
- Research Institute on Poverty, www.irp.wisc.edu/