

CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

2020  
HOMELESS  
CRISIS  
RESPONSE  
SYSTEM  
REPORT

PUBLISHED BY COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS



# 2020 HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM REPORT | CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

By Kate Budd, Executive Director, Council for the Homeless

The year 2020 was one like no other. Before COVID, I would never have believed someone if they told me restaurants and theaters were going to shut down and everyone was going to be wearing masks. Or that people living on the streets across the nation were going to be housed in motels in order to have a home in which to “stay home and stay healthy.” And yet these things and many more surprising realities occurred.

During COVID our community showed time and time again that all people deserve to have a healthy home to live in. The many organizations that united to address homelessness stepped up to identify more safe housing options during 2020 than were available in 2019 — a tremendous community response to this problem.

I also want to recognize those who are living on the streets in Clark County. While local businesses, communities and households experienced major COVID outbreaks, those living on the streets did not. When I talked to people living in encampments and in their cars, they took the threat of COVID very seriously, stayed in their pods, and stayed away from others. They shared that it’s been a particularly difficult year because, as Sherree put it, “There’s been very few places for us to relieve ourselves, people are scared of coming in contact with anyone, and everything is shut down.”

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“There’s been very few places for us to relieve ourselves, people are scared of coming in contact with anyone, and everything is shut down.” —Sherree

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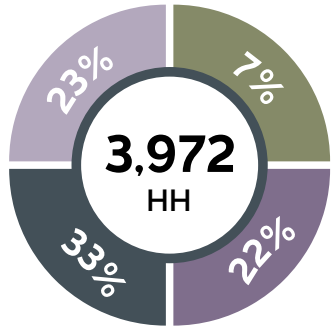
The COVID crisis has also shone a bright light on the ongoing harm BIPOC communities have experienced as a result of systemic racism and oppression. The effects of COVID have only heightened this harm. Systems, including our local homeless crisis response system, must be more transparent. Disaggregating data by race and ethnicity is vital to identifying and addressing past and future systemic and structural racism. [A Brief Timeline of Race and Homelessness in America](#) provides a detailed history of the harm caused and perpetuated by systemic oppression, discrimination and racism. The [Clark County Annualized Homelessness Equity Dashboard](#) is one way we seek to share information and address harm, and the [2020 System Numbers](#) are another.

# CLARK COUNTY HOMELESS SYSTEM NUMBERS | 2020

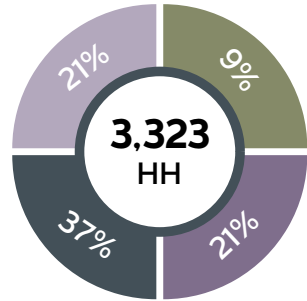
FAMILIES
  YOUTH (12-24)
  BIPOC HH
  SENIORS  
 BIPOC= Black, Indigenous and People of Color      HH= Households

HOUSED BY CFTH WITH LIGHTEST TOUCH ASSISTANCE

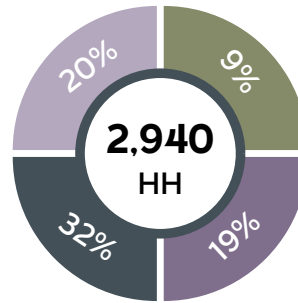
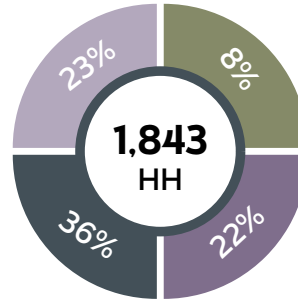
HOMELESS IN CLARK COUNTY



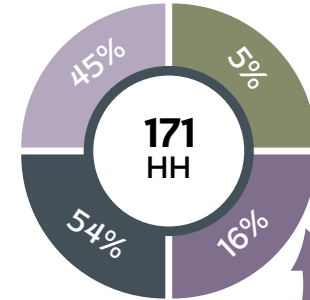
CALLED CFTH HOUSING HOTLINE FOR ASSISTANCE



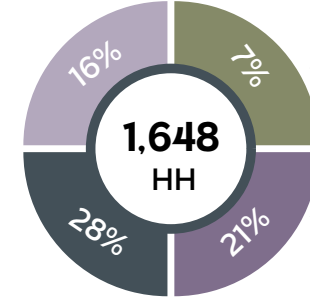
ASKED FOR SHELTER



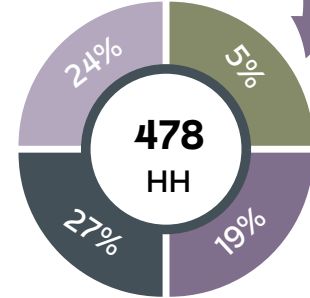
ELIGIBLE FOR HOUSING PROGRAMS



DIVERSION

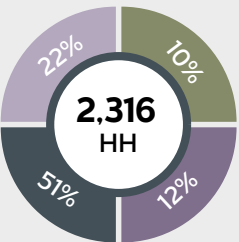


SHELTER



HOUSING

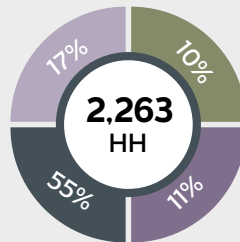
PLACED INTO ONE OF 37 HOUSING PROGRAMS



SOUGHT RENTAL ASSISTANCE

(DOES NOT REPRESENT THE FULL NEED)

RECEIVED RENTAL ASSISTANCE



# Key takeaways from the Annual 2020 System Numbers

- The number of households experiencing homelessness in Clark County remained unchanged from 2019 to 2020. In 2019 and 2020, nearly two thirds of the people experiencing homelessness were new to homelessness and had not touched the local homeless system in the last twenty years.

Clark County continues to see the rate at which people fall into homelessness track at the same rate at which people are moved out of homelessness into permanent housing. Inability to afford housing, domestic violence and household crisis are the top three primary reasons for homelessness given during initial screening.

- The number of people identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) remained unchanged between 2019 and 2020, at approximately 36% of the total population of people experiencing homelessness.
- The number of seniors age 55 and over experiencing homelessness remained unchanged at approximately 14% of the total population in 2019 and 2020 (881 and 868 individuals respectively). This is significantly higher than 2018, when 606 seniors reported experiencing homelessness.

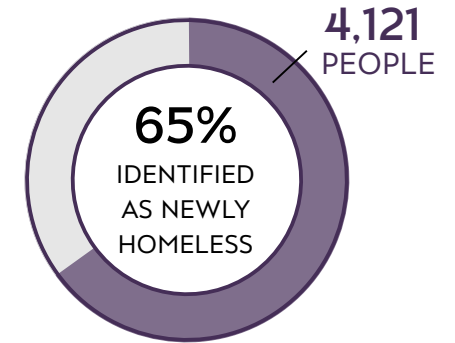
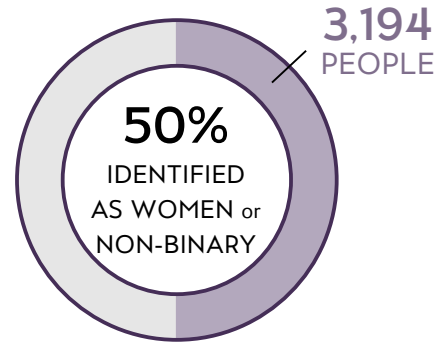
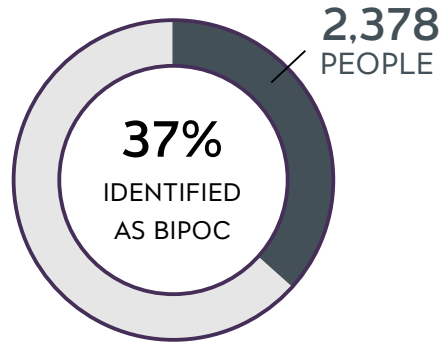
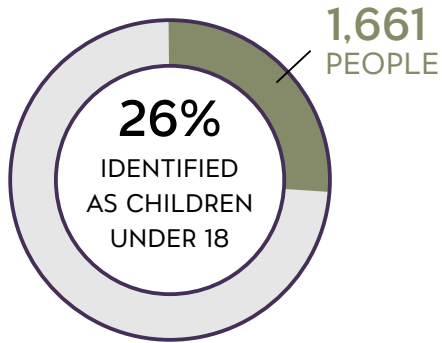
- Among seniors age 55 and over experiencing homelessness, 20% identified as BIPOC and 10% of those people identified as Black.
- People of Color, with the exception of people who identify as Asian, are more likely to experience homelessness in Clark County than their white neighbors, based on 2019 and 2020 data. Black or Pacific Islander neighbors are over eight times more likely to experience homelessness than their white neighbors.
- The likelihood of experiencing homelessness rose by 0.7% from 2019–2020 for Black community members, whereas it was reduced for all other races and ethnicities.
- Over 50% of people experiencing homelessness in Clark County identified as female or non-binary. More than 25% of people experiencing homelessness were under the age of 18.
- Five times more households received rent assistance in 2020 than in 2019. This is directly tied to the harmful effects of COVID on household income and health. The significant increase in private and public funding assisted 2,263 households, 50% of whom identified as having one adult of color in their household.

- Twice as many households were provided access to emergency shelter in 2020 than in 2019. This equates to nearly 89% of households who requested shelter being able to access shelter for at least one night in 2020, compared to 46% in 2019. This is directly tied to the harmful effects of COVID, the high-risk of COVID on people who are vulnerable to health conditions, and the encouragement of people to stay at home, which is difficult if someone does not have a home. Share House, Share at St. Andrew WHO, Outsider's Inn at St. Paul, the Motel Six Quarantine and Isolation Shelter, and Council for the Homeless Motel Vouchers all provided additional bed nights to people experiencing homelessness for months in 2020. In addition, all local shelters remained open and adapted as necessary to serve their residents.
- Over 54% of the households who moved into permanent housing through Diversion assistance were households of color. As shared by one mom who identified as Latinx, "I like that I didn't have to jump through hoops and wait to get help. It was up to me to make this happen, and my coach helped me find a landlord who would rent to me and help find a job again."
- Of the people experiencing homelessness in 2020 who shared their last permanent ZIP code, more than 22% identified it as 98661. This area encompasses the Fourth Plain Cultural District, Vancouver Heights and Minnehaha areas. Continued targeted investments in the health and stability of households in this ZIP code area could help reduce the inflow of people moving into homelessness.
- The number of households experiencing homelessness who were placed in a permanent housing programs (RRH and PSH) increased by 90 households between 2020 and 2019. However, the number of households eligible for housing programs rose by 33%. This is indicative of households having higher barriers to housing, such as low-incomes, behavioral health needs, physical health needs, child care needs, and surviving domestic violence. Housing providers observed that these barriers were made even more challenging due to the effects of COVID.
- Nearly 75% of people experiencing homelessness in 2020 who shared their last permanent ZIP code were from Clark County. This percentage has remained relatively unchanged for the last three years.

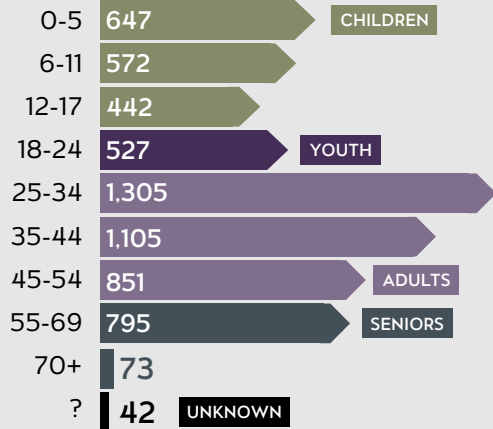
# Homelessness in Clark County, WA | 2020



The **3,972** households (HH) who were homeless in Clark County during 2020 contained **6,359** people. Of those people:



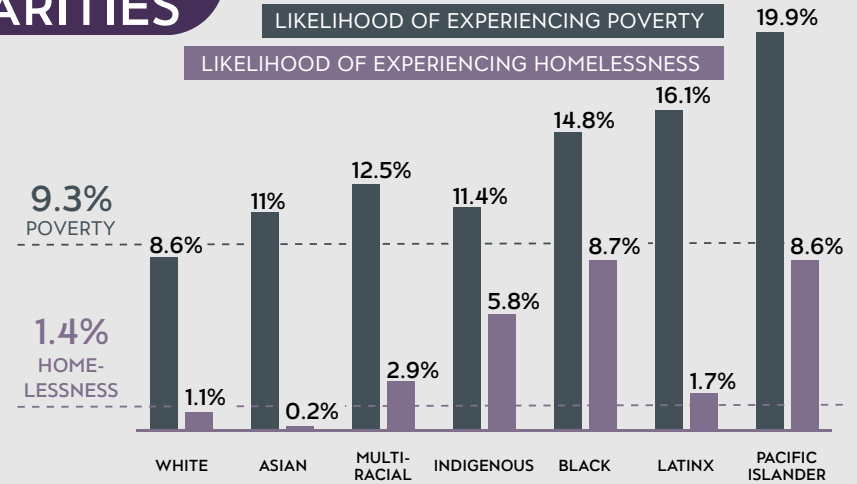
## AGES



## RACIAL DISPARITIES

People of color are significantly more likely to experience poverty and homelessness in Clark County, Washington.

The dotted lines show the likelihood of the average person in Clark County experiencing these states; bars taller than the lines indicate greater vulnerability.



## HOUSING AGENCIES



NO SINGLE NUMBER CAN TELL THE WHOLE STORY. LEARN MORE AT [COUNCILFORTHEHOMELESS.ORG](https://www.councilforthehomeless.org)

ALL DATA FROM CLARK COUNTY WA HMIS | 3.23.2021

# Clark County, Washington HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM Clients

JANUARY 1, 2020 - DECEMBER 31, 2020

The numbers (right) show the reported permanent residence prior to homelessness for all unduplicated individuals who identified as homeless in our Clark County Homeless Management Information System during 2020 and reported a valid "Zip Code of Permanent Address" to service providers.

Note: These numbers do not represent all people experiencing homelessness from Jan. 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020 as 24.4% of adults did not have a valid "Zip Code of Last Permanent Residence" recorded in HMIS. These numbers are based on the 75.6% of clients where the data was available and represented a valid US zip code.

Zip codes are not intended for geographical mapping use, so some zip codes are both inside and outside of a given geography. In these cases, they are assigned to whichever geography covers the majority of the zip code.

Clients are asked to provide the primary reason for their homelessness when they access some services. Answering this question is entirely optional. The top five responses for clients experiencing homelessness in 2020 are shown at right.



No single number can tell the whole story.  
Learn more at [councilforthehomeless.org](http://councilforthehomeless.org)

City	Zip Code	# of People	% of Clark County Total	% of Overall Total
Amboy	98601	9	0.33%	0.25%
Battle Ground	98604	89	3.31%	2.51%
Brush Prairie	98606	12	0.45%	0.34%
Camas	98607	53	1.97%	1.49%
La Center	98629	17	0.63%	0.48%
Ridgefield	98642	31	1.15%	0.87%
Vancouver	98660	249	9.26%	7.01%
Vancouver	98661	795	29.56%	22.39%
Vancouver	98663	130	4.83%	3.66%
Vancouver	98664	118	4.39%	3.32%
Vancouver	98666	26	0.97%	0.73%
Vancouver	98668	10	0.37%	0.28%
Vancouver	98683	105	3.90%	2.96%
Vancouver	98684	130	4.83%	3.66%
Vancouver	98687	5	0.19%	0.14%
Vancouver (uninc.)	98662	234	8.70%	6.59%
Vancouver (uninc.)	98665	186	6.92%	5.24%
Vancouver (uninc.)	98682	240	8.93%	6.76%
Vancouver (uninc.)	98685	61	2.27%	1.72%
Vancouver (uninc.)	98686	72	2.68%	2.03%
Washougal	98671	81	3.01%	2.28%
Woodland	98674	21	0.78%	0.59%
Yacolt	98675	15	0.56%	0.42%

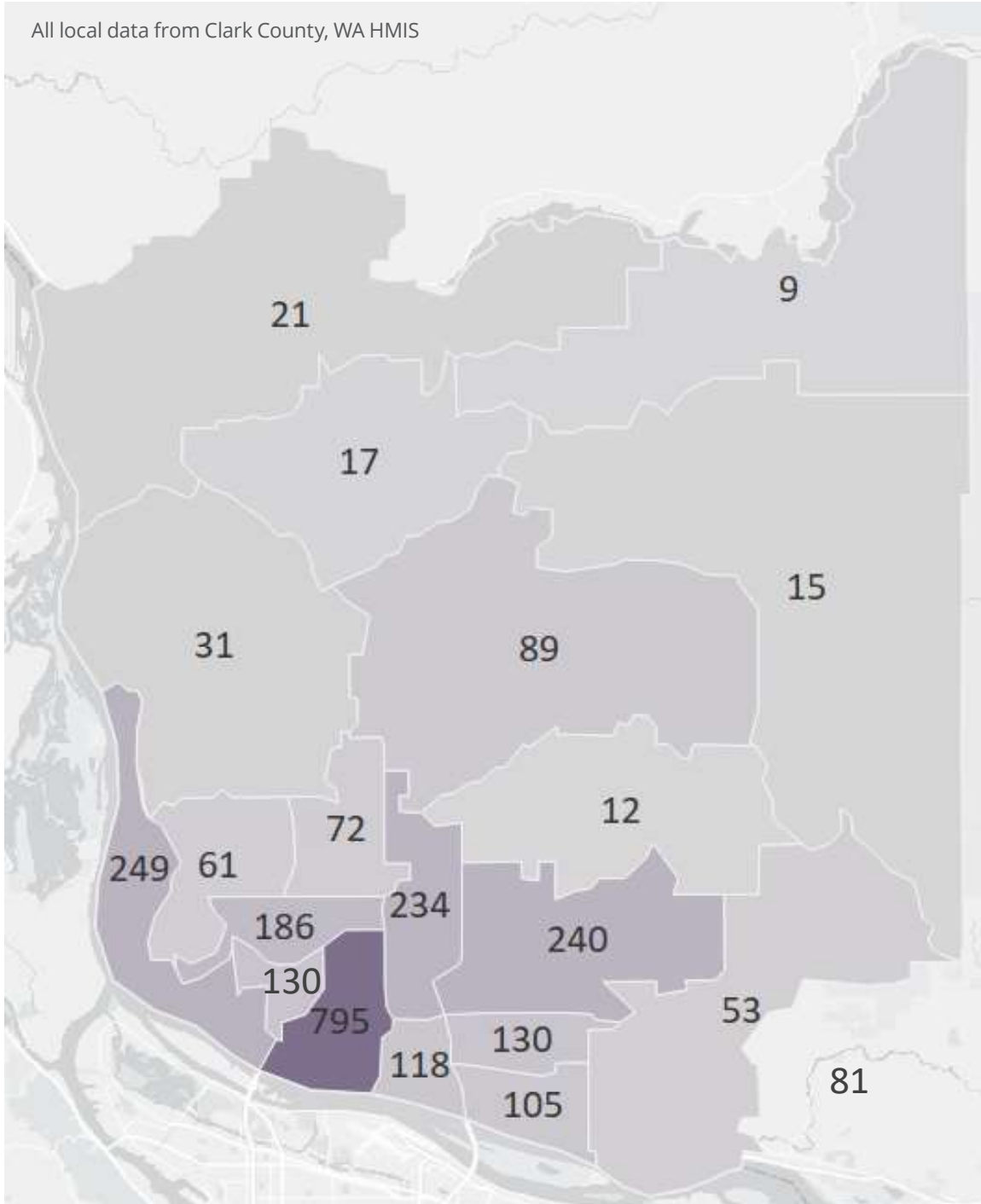
Reason	People Reporting	% of People Reporting
Cannot Afford Housing	972	27.37%
Domestic Violence	561	15.80%
Household Crisis	529	14.90%
Eviction	202	5.69%
Substance/Alcohol Dependency	152	4.28%

State	# of People	% of Total
Washington	2,994	84.31%
Clark County	2,689	75.73%
Vancouver	2,361	66.49%
Oregon	287	8.08%
Portland	184	5.18%
California	57	1.61%
Nevada	16	0.45%
Arizona	13	0.37%
Florida	13	0.37%
Texas	12	0.34%
Idaho	10	0.28%
Utah	9	0.25%
Ohio	9	0.25%
Colorado	9	0.25%
Georgia	7	0.20%
Oklahoma	7	0.20%
Hawaii	7	0.20%
Montana	6	0.17%
Arkansas	6	0.17%
Alaska	6	0.17%
Indiana	6	0.17%
New Mexico	6	0.17%
Missouri	6	0.17%
Massachusetts	5	0.14%
Virginia	5	0.14%
Nebraska	4	0.11%
Kansas	4	0.11%
Pennsylvania	4	0.11%
South Carolina	4	0.11%
Wyoming	4	0.11%
North Dakota	4	0.11%
Louisiana	4	0.11%
Michigan	3	0.08%
Wisconsin	3	0.08%
Illinois	3	0.08%
Kentucky	3	0.08%
North Carolina	3	0.08%
Mississippi	2	0.06%
New York	2	0.06%
Minnesota	2	0.06%
Tennessee	2	0.06%
West Virginia	1	0.03%
New Jersey	1	0.03%
Alabama	1	0.03%
Maryland	1	0.03%

**Overall Total 3,551**



All local data from Clark County, WA HMIS



## Map of Clark County, Washington HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM Clients

For an interactive zip code map please visit:

[www.councilforthehomeless.org/  
annual-system-data/](http://www.councilforthehomeless.org/annual-system-data/)



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## Clark County Calls to Action:

- All publicly funded programs that support people moving out of homelessness should be entering data into HMIS in order to track the overall system outcomes and program successes.
- Continue to invest in and partner with groups and agencies that are “by and for” BIPOC community members. By and for groups and agencies are operated by members of a community for the members of their community.
- Invest in housing and homelessness programs that are specifically for the BIPOC community and/or are shown to have strong outcomes for BIPOC households.
- Increase permanent housing options in Clark County that are affordable for those at 30% of the median income. This includes further diversifying housing options, including small homes, du-/tri-/quadplexes, studios, utilization of motels, and ADUs. Increase funding for supportive services that assist people in remaining housed.
- Increase the number of housing-focused street outreach staff in the community, particularly those working non-traditional work hours. Outreach staff are professionals trained to connect people who are unhoused to resources.

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“It took a village to help me and my girls get housed. We moved from our car to a motel for a month when COVID first broke out. During that time, I was able to find a shared housing situation and received assistance with move-in costs. Then, my girls and I were able to access furniture for our two rooms. Now we are safe and my girls can attend virtual school from our new home.”

— Suzanne, mother of two

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- Increase capacity for non-law-enforcement staff to address the needs of people in mental health crises in our community. This includes mobile 24/7 peer crisis counselors, mental health practitioners and physical health providers, including a prescriber.
- Increase safe and affordable child care resources, especially for parents who work non-traditional hours, need drop-off respite support and rely on public transportation.

Please join us **April 20, 2021** for a **webinar** focused on the **2020 System Numbers**.

Register at [councilforthehomeless.org/community-education](https://councilforthehomeless.org/community-education).

Follow progress on these action items by signing up for one or more of our email lists at [tinyurl.com/CFTHnews](https://tinyurl.com/CFTHnews).