



Department of Housing Services



Washington County has responded with urgency to our community’s homelessness crisis, building an effective system of care.

Over the past three years, Washington County has built out a comprehensive homeless system of care that has been extremely effective: with a solutions-based approach Washington County has achieved a 35.5% decline in unsheltered homelessness and [closed down its large encampments](#). This happened because the Metro Region voters agreed to a new tax dedicating revenues to serving the homeless population and making homelessness, rare, brief and one-time.

However, Metro is planning to refer a measure for the May 2025 election that would reduce Supportive Housing Services (SHS) taxes; divert shelter, services and rental assistance funds to affordable housing development and city programs; and extend the 2030 sunset.

Simply put, Metro is contemplating tax rate changes that would make us go backwards. The range of possible reductions contemplated (\$28-45 million annually). These cuts represent a range of between 23% to 38% reductions from our FY 24/25 base budget. And while we do not know the means and rates of these cuts, the entire proposal will require reductions in the programs the County just built. Based on what we know, here are examples of what going backwards looks like for Washington County:

<p>Closing over 200 shelter beds</p> <p>Which could compromise local Time, Place & Manner policies and lead to an increase in encampments</p>	<p>Scaling back outreach teams</p> <p>Which could increase response time for outreach requests and reduce connection points to shelter and housing</p>	<p>Halting plans for a fourth Access Center</p>
<p>Permanent housing placements only through attrition</p> <p>Which means longer waitlists for housing available when someone leaves the program</p>	<p>No operating support for some Project Turnkey Motels</p> <p>Which means these capital funds would need to be repaid</p>	<p>Ending workforce development program</p>



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We have appreciated our collaboration with Metro, fellow counties, cities and service providers under the current SHS measure and will continue highlighting achievements only possible through this dedicated funding source. Through this resource, we have built a system of care encompassing:

- **10 dedicated outreach teams** dispersed geographically
- **420+ shelter beds** and emergency beds set aside for law enforcement and partners
- **Medium/short-term rental assistance stabilizing 2,300+ households** in three years
- **Long-term rental assistance housing 1,300 households** in three years with plans to expand to 1,600+ households

Through these programs, we **served over 10,000 people in the last year alone** and **expended 100% of our budget** to serve our most vulnerable community members.

Community members who have been housed:



We are calling on Metro to focus on the basics of running SHS prior to putting forth a referral to the voters just three years into a 10-year program. Putting our heads together across jurisdictions, with our community-based organizations, and with the recent data shared in our Year 3 annual report is the only way to ensure a future ballot referral meets our needs today and tomorrow.

**We are addressing racial housing disparities by serving Latine (41%) and Black (14%) populations higher than their rate of need. In Washington County, Latine individuals represent 27% of people below the poverty line and Black or African Americans represent 6% of people below the poverty line and.*