



Pierce County Unified Regional Approach to Homelessness (URA)

Tacoma City Council Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee
Thursday, July 9, 2026

Jani Hitchen Chair of the Pierce County Council	Mary Connolly Policy Analyst, Pierce County Council Office
---	--

1

Agenda

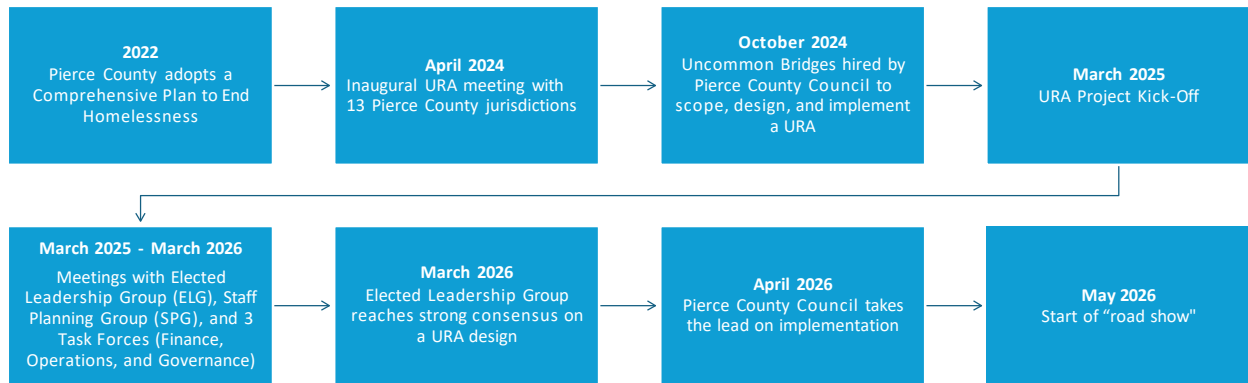
- How we got here
- Homelessness in Pierce County
- Why a Unified Regional Approach?
- Pierce County Unified Regional Approach (URA) Design
- Next Steps



2

2

How we got here ...



3

3

Road Show

- May 5: Edgewood City Council ✓
- May 19: Fife City Council ✓
- May 21: Pierce County Regional Council ✓
- June 8: Lakewood City Council ✓
- June 10: Orting City Council ✓
- June 11: Gig Harbor City Council ✓
- July 9: Tacoma City Council Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee

In process of scheduling with City of University Place



4

4

Homelessness in Pierce County – Who?

Homelessness affects all kinds of people.



Families



Adults



Youth



Disabled
People



Veterans



Seniors



5

5

Homelessness in Pierce County – Why?

Homelessness has many different causes.



Job loss,
living on a
fixed
income



Medical
emergency,
mental health
crisis



Rising rent,
foreclosure,
eviction



Domestic
violence, young
people aging out
of foster care,
family break-up



6

6

Homelessness in Pierce County – How?

Homelessness doesn't always look the same.

Homeless people and families may ...



Sleep in
a
shelter



Double
up



Couch
surf



Sleep in
a car



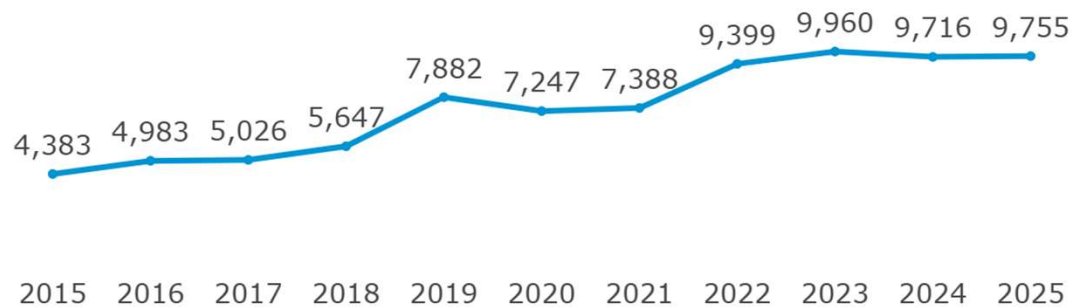
Sleep in
a tent



7

7

Number of Homeless People Served by Pierce County's Homeless Crisis Response System



Notes

- Data Source: Pierce County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- Counts may include duplication for individuals who received continuous services across multiple years.
- Data extract date: 6/10/2026



8

8

Homeless People Served in 2025 by City They Last Slept In

City/Jurisdiction	Number of Homeless Individuals Who Reported they Last Slept In this City	Notes
Tacoma	5,791	- Data Source: Pierce County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). - Data extract Date: 6/10/26 - Data are self-reported. - These data represent where people last slept, not their last permanent address. - Individuals may be counted more than once if their responses differed during enrollments for different programs. 2609 individuals did not report where they last slept, and 693 last slept outside of Pierce County. - This dataset is updated monthly. For the most up-to-date data, visit Pierce County's Homeless Crisis Response System dashboard.
Puyallup	580	
Lakewood	497	
Pierce County (Unincorporated)	461	
Fife	197	
Gig Harbor	79	
University Place	51	
Sumner	45	
Other Cities and Towns	39	
Bonney Lake	33	
Orting	27	
Milton	18	
Eatonville	16	
Roy	15	

9

Eviction Prevention Program Demand

2,301 households submitted eligible applications to Pierce County Human Services' Eviction Prevention program from January 1, 2024 – July 30, 2025.

Data Source: Pierce County.



10

10

Eviction Prevention Program Demand by City

City/Jurisdiction	Eligible Eviction Prevention Applications received by Pierce County from Jan 1 2024 – June 30 2025
Tacoma	877
Pierce County (Unincorporated)	640
Lakewood	279
Puyallup	100
Fife	75
University Place	75
Other Cities and Towns	38
Milton	29
Edgewood	27
Sumner	18
Auburn	18
Fircrest	16

Data Source: Pierce County.

11

Number of Students in McKinney Vento Program during 2024-2025 School Year by School District

School District	Number of Homeless Students
Tacoma	2173
Bethel	922
Puyallup	665
Clover Park	527
Franklin Pierce	501
Sumner-Bonney Lake	266
Peninsula	197
Fife	153
White River	94
University Place	72
Orting	62
Eatonville	38
Steilacoom Historical	14
Dierenger	5
Carbonado	0

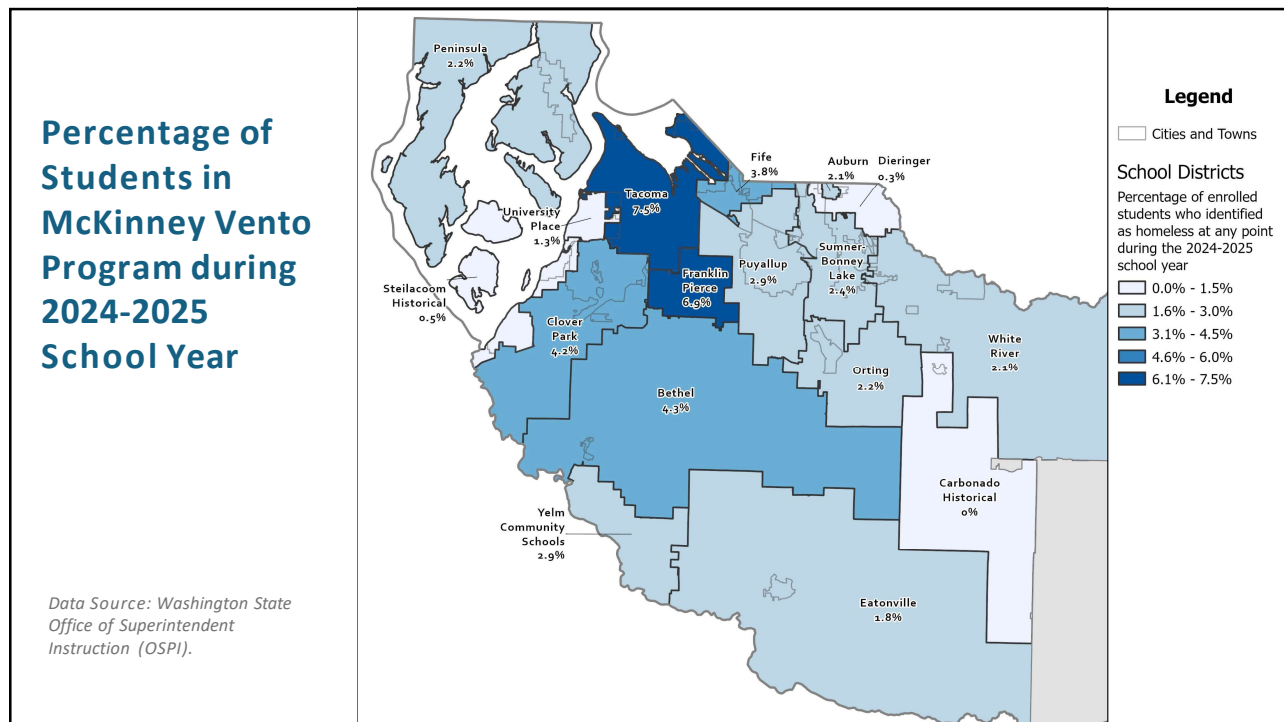
5689 enrolled students in
Pierce County identified as
homeless at any point during
the 2024-2025 school year.

*McKinney Vento programs serve
children and youth who lacking a fixed,
regular, and adequate nighttime
residence.*

Data Source: Washington State Office of
Superintendent Instruction (OSPI).

Data from Auburn and Yelm School
Districts are not included.

12



13

Existing Homelessness Response & Prevention Services

There are a variety of programs to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- Examples of County-wide programs:
 - Eviction Prevention & Homeless Prevention Programs – rental assistance, case management
 - Shelter Access Hub – 24/7 call line to connect to shelter
 - Coordinated Entry – entry point to certain housing referrals
- Examples of programs supported or operated by individual jurisdictions:
 - Edgewood – provides funding for a community center to serve as a safe place to go during extreme weather
 - Gig Harbor – hires a Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager to connect residents to resources
 - Fife – operates a shelter and jobs program; conducts street outreach; hosts severe weather shelter
 - Tacoma – supports outreach services, a variety of shelter models, and supportive housing; HEAL team



14

14

Why a Unified a Regional Approach?

- For people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness: accessing programs can be confusing and the system can feel disconnected.
- For organizations that support homeless people: inconsistent requirements across government funders requires them to spend an inordinate amount of their scarce resources on compliance.
- For local governments: there are finite resources and capacity to support residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; there is no dedicated staff capacity to facilitating collaboration across governments to address homelessness.



15

15

Vision & Mission of the Unified Regional Approach (URA)

Vision

A unified regional approach to substantially reduce homelessness so that it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Mission

The URA empowers Pierce County governments to choose locally responsive solutions to respond to and prevent homelessness, while establishing a countywide framework that supports coordination and efficient use of shared resources.



16

16

What will the URA do?

- Facilitate coordination, collaboration, and communication across governments related to homeless response and prevention.
- Provide technical assistance to governments in implementing locally-tailored solutions.
- Access additional resources and funding to serve Pierce County.
- Track and report on County-wide data and outcomes to understand what is working well and where the system needs improvement.



17

17

How could the URA benefit the City of Tacoma?

- Convene staff to collaborate and share ideas.
- Provide support for collaborative projects, such as administering pooled funding for services, administering shared services, or applying for grants.
- Facilitate alignment of procedures across jurisdictions – e.g. procurement timelines, contract requirements, inclement weather response, etc.
- Advocate for federal and state funding for the region.
- Increase capacity for other cities to respond to homelessness.



18

18

URA Governance, Structure, & Staffing

- URA will be formally established via interlocal agreement (ILA)
- Participation by governments is voluntary
- Governed by a board of elected officials representing participating governments
- Pierce County will serve as the administering organization for the URA, including as the employer for URA staff
- For the first 1-3 years, annual budget is expected to be about \$400,000 - \$600,000, primarily supporting employment of 2-3 FTEs
 - Budget will depend on revenues from participating governments, with the amounts based on the population of each jurisdiction living in Pierce County
 - Estimated annual budget for City of Tacoma is \$92,000 - \$142,000



19

19

Next Steps: Resolution of Intent

Governments interested in participating in the URA are asked to adopt a resolution of intent to:

- Express their intent and commitment to working with other governments to launch a URA
- Direct staff to work with other governments to develop an ILA
- While an ILA is development, commit to certain activities (as described on the next slide)



20

20

Next Steps: Coordinated Activities

- Develop or update **data collection requirements** for homeless service providers
- Develop or update a procedure to **connect residents** who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to **resources** (e.g. housing, shelter, rental assistance)
- Develop or update a policy to connect homeless people to resources during **inclement weather events** (e.g. extreme heat and cold) and identify locations that may serve as inclement weather shelter
- Support **establishment or expansion** of at least **one homeless intervention**



21

21

Resolutions of Intent

- Pierce County: Resolution No. 2026-152, adopted May 26 ✓
- City of Fife: Resolution No. 2259, adopted June 23 ✓
- City of Gig Harbor: Council directed Mayor and staff to prepare a resolution; Resolution to be considered by Council on July 13

Once at least 5 governments of various sizes have adopted a resolution of intent, those governments will begin interlocal agreement (ILA) negotiations.



22

22

Find Meeting Materials on the URA Website

<https://www.unifiedregionalapproach.com/>



23

23

Questions?

Jani Hitchen

Chair of the Pierce County Council

Jani.Hitchen@piercecountywa.gov

Mary Connolly

Policy Analyst, Pierce County Council Office

Mary.Connolly@piercecountywa.gov

24