

A Profile on Homelessness in Mason County

FULL REPORT, *released December 2017*

Homelessness in Mason County

In the fiscal year from 7/1/16 through 6/30/17, Mason County awarded \$354,000 in grants from the local document recording fees per RCW 36.22.179, "Surcharge for local homeless housing and assistance – Use". The Homeless Housing Grant Program was created in Washington State by Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (ESSHB) 2163 on August 1, 2005. The law created a document recording fee on certain documents to be utilized by local jurisdictions to reduce homelessness. The Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) combined \$721,727 dollars of state homeless resources into a single grant opportunity for county governments and other designated entities under the administration of the Department of Commerce. Administration of the grant funds are shared between local governments and the state. This money is awarded through an annual Request for Proposal (RFP) process and during this time 5 non-profit organizations were awarded contracts to aid in the operation of 8 programs. This report will attempt to summarize homelessness in Mason County, celebrate all the services provided by these non-profits, the total number of people served and the results of the various programs.

How Many People Experience Homelessness in Mason County?

This is a challenging question to answer. Much of Mason County's beauty comes from the remote terrain which makes finding a person, family or small group experiencing homelessness difficult especially if they are trying not to be found. Another challenge is people may not consider themselves homeless even though they meet the definition. This is more common when people are living in structures that lack amenities such as the ability to cook food, have potable water, electricity or a restroom. What about people that are staying with friends or family? This question is among different scenarios and conditions which makes it necessary to define homelessness and speak about the methods to determine how many people experience homelessness in Mason County.

When defining homelessness, The United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), established 4 categories:

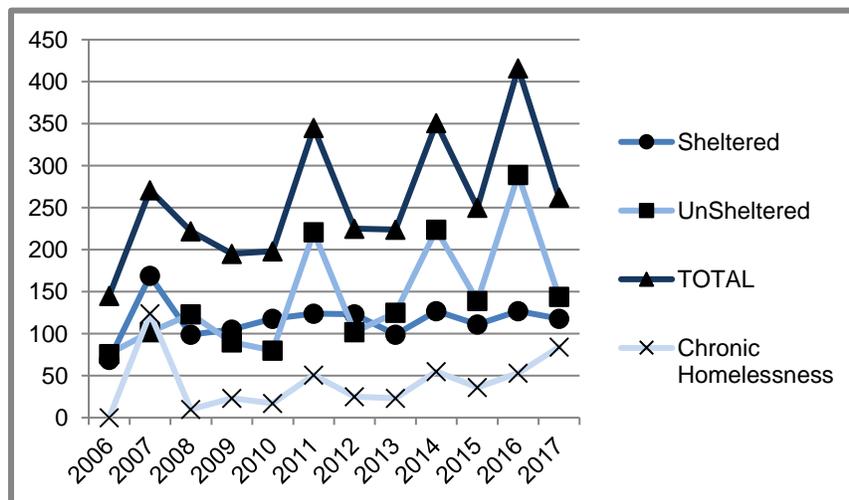
1. Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
2. Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
3. Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; or
4. Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

In a national effort to conduct a homeless census, every county across the United States participates in a Point in Time Count (PIT Count), usually the last Thursday in January. One night is chosen as the reference point to "where did you stay last night?" and to determine a snap-shot of how many persons is experiencing homelessness. Each person is physically

counted and there is an attempt to complete a survey on each person to gather some basic information. The last week of January has been selected because it is a cold time of the year with the rationale that it will count those that are truly homeless. A standard methodology is strongly encouraged, and every effort is made to implement a standard process. Some limitations occur such as who leads the count from one year to the next, the volunteers that can be mobilized and approaches vary slightly from one county to the next, in part depending on how metro or rural the county. Many counties, including Mason County, share similar approaches to holding “Project Connect” events to feed people and hand out donations and have volunteers at different strategic “count sites”. The PIT Count is accepted as an under-count, but it is the best single nation-wide effort to conduct a census. With consistent methodology, it can provide some comparisons between years to indicate the effectiveness of the programs to address homelessness.

The PIT Count follows the HUD definition of homelessness and has two categories that count toward homelessness: Sheltered and Unsheltered. Sheltered refers to any persons staying in a shelter that is either night by night, short-term (usually 90 days) and transitional housing (up to two years of temporary housing) programs. Unsheltered homelessness includes outdoors, vehicle, abandoned building, and a structure that is not meant for human habitation (e.g. no potable water, heat, ability to cook, restroom and/or ability to bathe). Housing situations that do not count under this definition include temporarily living with family or friends, “couch surfing”, currently in a hospital, detox or other facility, or currently in jail. The results for the past eleven years follow:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sheltered	69	169	99	105	118	124	123	99	127	111	127	118
UnSheltered	76	102	123	90	80	221	102	125	224	139	289	144
TOTAL	145	271	222	195	198	345	225	224	351	250	416	262
Chronic Homelessness	<i>no data</i>	124	10	23	17	51	25	23	55	36	53	84



In the graph above, the total number of people counted as homeless fluctuates with the influence of the unsheltered number. This is the number that will vary the most depending on the count methodology and the number of volunteers involved. The number of sheltered has

remained relatively constant because the amount of and availability of shelter space has remained unchanged over the years. The trends we can decipher over the years are that the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness is increasing and there is a slight rise in the people experiencing homelessness.

The PIT Count survey has five parts: A) Location: Where did you stay last night?; B) Length of time homeless (chronic homelessness); C) Demographic household information; D) Circumstances that caused homelessness; and E) sources of household income & benefits. Survey participants have the right to refuse answering any question, answer it anonymously or give consent to be associated with their answers. All data is entered into the Homeless Management and Information Systems (HMIS) data base managed by the Department of Commerce. Only aggregate data is used when compiling the results of the PIT Count. A person meets the definition of chronic homelessness when their time homeless has been 1 year or more or they've been homeless 4 or more times in the past 3 years that when added together totals a year or more. A breakdown of the challenges faced by the 144-unsheltered people experiencing homelessness from the 2017 Point in Time Count is in the following tables:

Demographics	
Male	42%
Female	58%
Veteran	10%
Race & Ethnicity	
White	77%
Hispanic	17%
Pacific Islander	9%
Multiple	6%
Black	3%
Native American or Alaska Native	2%
Asian	1%

Income	
Income Received	45%
No Income	10%
Unknown	44%
Type of Income Received	
SSI	46%
TANF	18%
Employed (part-time)	11%
Not Reported	11%
Temporary Disability	6%
VA Benefits	3%
Relative or Friend	3%
Child Support	2%

Circumstances that Caused Homelessness	
Job Loss / employment	51%
Eviction / loss of housing	43%
Physical health / disability	31%
Lack of job training / unable to work	25%
Mental Illness	18%
Alcohol / substance abuse	16%
Domestic Violence	15%
Family rejection / kicked out	11%
Abuse / neglect	9%
Discharged from hospital or other medical facility	8%
Discharged from Criminal / Juvenile Justice System	5%
Illness	5%
Medical Costs	3%
Lack of childcare	1%

In January 2017, The Department of Commerce released the State of Washington Homeless Housing Strategic Plan with the vision of “no person left living outside”. The goal in Mason County is to reduce the number of people classified as unsheltered homelessness to align with Washington State’s plan and serve those in our community with the most need. A continued understanding of the causes of homelessness and data that show the number of people impacted are needed to create strategies, plans and find solutions to reduce the number of people living outside.

Mason County ranks 3rd most severe when comparing the per capita number of households that are experiencing homelessness from the 2017 PIT data. The top 10 counties are represented in the table below.

County	Sheltered Total	Unsheltered Total	Total	Estimate of Total households	Per 100,000
King	6,158	5,485	11,643	819,651	1420.48
Jefferson	100	87	187	13,422	1393.23
Mason	118	98	216	23,026	938.07
Clallam	193	88	281	31,321	897.16
Chelan-Douglas	334	36	370	41,264	896.67
Whatcom	443	270	713	79,767	893.85
Cowlitz	235	96	331	39,763	832.43
Walla Walla	103	65	168	21,696	774.34
Grays Harbor	110	91	201	27,219	738.45
Yakima	502	70	572	79,972	715.25

Other than the Point in Time Count, how can we assess the number of people experiencing homelessness and the progresses made? Coordinated Entry (Housing Crisis Support Center or HCSC) operated by Crossroads Housing and North Mason Resources along with the school districts are two other sources to help identify how many people experience homelessness in Mason County. Crossroads Housing is operated the Housing Crisis Support Center which started in May of 2016 and serves as a front door to community members facing a housing crisis. North Mason Resources filled in on Fridays as the primary contact for the HCSC. In this next year, HCSC services are being expanded in North and South Mason County. The Housing Crisis Support Center determines what type of crisis a person/family is in and matches them up with available resources. From the table below, there were 375 households making up 1,037 people experiencing a housing crisis in Mason County this past year. Through partnership with other organizations, the HCSC assisted 88 literally homeless households get into permanent housing. Community agencies are developing relationships with the school districts to assist with connecting youth to services and better understand homelessness among youth and their families.

The following table shows the number of households that sought services through the Coordinated Entry System known locally as the **Housing Crisis Support Center**:

Total Number of Households Seeking Services by Category					
Type:	Households	Individuals	Adults	Youth 18-24	Children
Total Seeking Services	375	1037	422	78	527

While assisting a person or family, Housing Crisis Support Center collects information to match them with the best program. The information on the causes of homelessness are self-reported and when combined with the information from the PIT Count can be a helpful reflection to the community needs and services. Lack of affordable housing stock is the number one reason reported for being homeless. Affordable housing relates directly to income level and many of the other reasons reported for causing homelessness, such as health or illness, contribute to the person's inability to work more than part-time or at all. Domestic violence is one of the major reasons reported as causing homelessness in Mason County. The top five reasons from the table below are in bold and are as follows: lack of affordable housing stock, fleeing domestic violence, displacement, family crisis and eviction.

Reasons for Homelessness as Reported from Coordinated Entry													
Alcoholism	Fleeing Domestic Violence	Lack of Affordable Housing	Criminal History	Displacement	Eviction	Family Crisis	Health or Illness	Mental Illness	New to Area	Unaccompanied Youth	Substance Abuse	Transient on Road	Other
1	143	173	27	78	39	72	25	15	31	1	23	3	44

This information is helpful as it varies from what is reported in the Point in Time Count; therefore, offering a more complete understanding behind the causes of homelessness. The reasons vary slightly due to information being collected throughout the year versus on a single night. We expect the domestic violence numbers to be lower during the annual PIT Count since many of the census sites were places many people congregated for food, donations and services that a person fleeing a domestic violence situation may avoid. In most cases, the survey is the first contact the PIT Count surveyors have had with the person experiencing homelessness and the person may not be willing to divulge the root causes of their situation.

Youth Homelessness

According to the Washington State Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth Prevention & Protection Programs 2016 Report, at least 13,000 young people in Washington are without a safe and stable place to call home throughout the course of a school year and 1,309 homeless on a single night. Family conflict is a major driver of youth homelessness and can include abuse, neglect, a parent's alcohol or drug abuse or mental health issue, domestic violence, as well as rejection due to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Homelessness among youth falls under the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act which is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states for supporting district programs that serve homeless students.

Local school districts must designate a homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified and served by facilitating access to school services including transportation. The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to enroll homeless children and youth immediately, even if they lack normally required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence. The act ensures that homeless children and youth have transportation to and from their school of origin if it is in the child's or youth's best interest.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This is an expanded definition than HUD uses in the annual Point in Time Count or Coordinated Entry to categorize someone as literally homeless. The McKinney-Vento definition includes "couch surfing" and/or temporarily living with friends and family under the example, "children and youth sharing housing due to a loss of housing, loss of housing or a similar reason". Data collected on how many people are couch-surfing or "doubled up" reveals how many people are "precariously housed" and on the edge of becoming literally homeless. Collaborative efforts among the community are taking place to improve the identification of homeless youth to better understand how many are literally homeless, the causes of homelessness and how well youth and their families relate to services. This type of information helps determine where to focus funding that will have the most impact.

The following table summarizes the 2015 – 2016 school district demographic data reported to the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In the table, the number of children and youth identified as homeless represents an accumulative number throughout the school year. This does not represent how many youth are experiencing homelessness at a given time, but rather how many have experienced homelessness throughout the school year. Unaccompanied youth are students not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and are a high priority to help resolve their housing crisis. This data helps provide the story of youth homelessness and who is affected in Mason County, but cannot be treated entirely separate from other data sources since many of the persons identified as homeless will be connected with and counted in other programs such as the Coordinated Entry data. School districts are not required to report the exact number if it is less than 10.

School	District Enrollment	# of Identified Homeless	Male	Female	Unaccompanied Youth	Homeless Special Education
Hood Canal	312	52	28	24	0	19
Mary M. Knight	157	<10	<10	<10	0	<10
North Mason	2180	136	71	65	0	32
Pioneer	690	26	12	14	0	<10
Shelton	4341	429	216	213	43	98
South Side	190	<10	<10	<10	0	<10
TOTAL	7870	643	327	316	43	149

While family conflict is a major driver of youth homelessness, economic instability is a primary contributing factor. A family's financial situation can put stable housing out of reach, resulting in

homelessness. House prices, utilities and other costs that influence rent such as property tax are rising faster than wages resulting in less affordable housing options. Unemployment and jobs that don't pay enough are just some of the economic barriers to housing faced by families. Challenges the community is working on: Many youth do not want to be found, let their situation be known and/or have limited resources available to them due to their age.

Can we end homelessness?

Ending homelessness is talked about in terms of subpopulations achieving functional zero; equilibrium between the number of persons that enter into homelessness and those that enter into permanent housing. It has become generally accepted that due to the complexity of factors that contribute to why people end up homeless, new or repeat incidences will, unfortunately, not completely end. As discussed, there are challenges counting every person that is experiencing homelessness and even if a state of functional zero is met, we know there is unaccounted people experiencing homelessness. What can be done that is common to any subgroup is to reduce the number of new incidences of homelessness, chronic homelessness and the returns to homelessness.

One subpopulation that is nearing functional zero is veterans. With the low number of homeless veterans in Mason County a dedicated and orchestrated effort can bring veterans to functional zero.

Each year in November the Veterans Service Organization hosts a "stand down" as a one-day event to provide supplies and services to homeless Veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA Social Security benefits, and counseling services. Veterans can also receive referrals to other assistance such as health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment and mental health counseling.

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs with the principle that every veteran has a right to housing. For veterans that qualify, the SSVF funds are to provide case management and financial assistance to help literally homeless veterans move into permanent housing. The Veteran Service Organization also administers the Veterans Assistance Fund to provide limited financial relief to indigent veterans such as past due rent, mortgage or utilities, burial services, and state ID card. This funding is important to help veterans achieve or maintain stable housing and to provide financial assistance for other approved necessity items.

A picture can be created on how many veterans are homeless through counts and have been connected to the range of services available. Data from these various sources can show changes in homelessness among veterans indicate the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and provide confidence in knowing when functional zero is met.

Source	Date Range	Number of Veterans Counted or Served
Stand Down – veteran homeless count	November 21, 2016	21
PIT Count	January 26, 2017	14
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	2016 Calendar Year	7
Number of Homeless Veterans served through Mental Health Case Management	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	3
Number of Veterans served through Substance Abuse Case Management	7/1/16 – 6/30/16	6
Coordinated Entry (households experiencing a housing crisis, total was 375)	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	10
Domestic Violence Shelter	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	3
Cold Weather Shelter	11/1/16 – 4/1/17	3
Family Shelter	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	1
SafetyNet (Rental Assistance) Program	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	1
Transitional Housing Programs	7/1/16 – 6/30/17	0
Veterans Assistance Fund – Housing Assistance Received	2016 Calendar Year	39

What Programs are available to assist people experiencing a Housing Crisis?

Crossroads Housing - Overview

Crossroads Housing is one of the largest non-profit organizations serving homeless individuals and families in Mason County since 1992. The agency's mission is to help move homeless families forward in life by helping them achieve greater self-sufficiency and stability through permanent, affordable housing. To accomplish this, they provide guidance, safe temporary housing, comprehensive case management and referrals to other agencies providing related and specialized care. Crossroads Housing provides our community with shelter units for up to seven families at a time and up to twelve transitional housing units for families transitioning into their own stable housing. Crossroads also provides rental assistance for low-income households in our community to prevent eviction or move into housing. In addition to these housing assistance services, Crossroads Housing operates the Housing Crisis Support Center (or Coordinated Entry for Housing in Mason County) which serves as a front door to community members facing a housing crisis. The Housing Solution Center determines what type of crisis a client is in and matches them up with available resources.

The Housing Crisis Support Center (Coordinated Entry) – Crossroads Housing

The Housing Crisis Support Center assists all families with problem solving to help resolve their housing crisis before referring to specific programs. HUD and the Department of Commerce require each county to operate a coordinated entry system. Coordinated entry is a system that streamlines access and referral to services and housing. It is a process that ensures that all people experiencing a housing crisis in a defined geographic area have fair and equal access, and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and homeless assistance based on their needs and strengths, no matter where or when they present for services.

Coordinated entry uses standardized tools and practices, incorporates a system-wide Housing First approach, participant choice, and coordinates housing and homeless assistance such that

housing and homeless assistance is prioritized for those with the most severe service needs. Coordinated entry must have a procedure for referring households to programs. A policy and procedure for rejecting referrals that ensures rejections are justified and rejected households are referred to appropriate services whenever possible must exist.

Total Number of Households Seeking Services by Category						
Type:	Households	Individuals	Adults	Youth 18-24	Children	
Literally Homeless (148 HH) Fleeing DV (39 HH)	187	487	212	51	234	
Not Literally Homeless	188	550	220	27	293	
Total Seeking Services:	375	1037	432	78	527	
Veterans (all literally homeless)	10	10	10	0	0	
Outcomes for Total Households Seeking Services by Category						
Literally Homeless (85 HH) /Fleeing DV (26HH)				Not Homeless		
Stably Housed	In Housing Program	Archived	On Wait List	Diversion	Prevention	Turn-Away
60	28	24	75	24	6	158

If a household is not identified as literally homeless there are approaches to providing services. Diversion is helping a household troubleshoot their situation and resolve their housing crisis without or minimal monetary resources. Often this means exploring extended family or friends even out of state to help provide temporary housing and a path toward permanent housing. Prevention is often providing rental assistance to a household with a pay or vacate notice to help them remain housed. Turn-Away is a term used to describe households that do not qualify for services.

In summary, 375 unique households made requests for housing assistance between 7/1/16 and 6/30/17. Out of this 187 households (49.86%) met the definition of literally homeless. Combined with the Point in Time Count, this information provides a clearer picture on how many households and people are experiencing homelessness in Mason County.

Family Shelter – Crossroads Housing

The family shelter was built in June 2014 and houses seven families at any given time. It is the only year-round shelter in the County serving families with children of any composition, including adult males. All households must include minor children, but can also meet that eligibility requirement if there is a current pregnancy or a pending CPS reunification.

Previously, shelter was defined as a strict 90-day term limit. This meant that even the more challenged households had to leave on Day 90 of their stay, even if they were not prepared to do so, and even if they did not have subsequent housing identified (which is often the case for more high-barrier clients). This resulted in having to discharge a lot of households into homelessness, which presents on paper as us having spent a good deal of funding with nothing to show for it. A change in shelter guidelines allowed stays past 90 days. Crossroads began to exercise this option only if clients had housing identified but were experiencing a delay that was

beyond their control (i.e. if the housing were still undergoing repairs, if a deposit payment were delayed). This year, the shelter staff has begun to extend stays upon a review process, based on a legitimate need (if the client needs more time despite showing progress), and having absolutely no other options for safe housing. Currently, there are six households who are currently residing in shelter for a term longer than 90 days. Three of them are pending moving onto longer term transitional housing and have severe income issues (among others); one other household has attained good income during their stay and is moving onto a rental assistance program to become permanently housed.

Numbers Served and Exits to Permanent Housing 7/1/2015 – 6/30/2017					
	Individuals	Households	Percent of Households Chronically Homeless	Number of Households Exiting to Permanent Housing	Percent of Households Exiting to Permanent Housing
2016 - 2017	94	29	31.03%	13	52.38%
2015 - 2016	144	37	13.51%	12	32.43%

One thing that is important to note, is the decrease in the number of individuals and households served during the 2016-2017 grant year from the previous year. A reason for the decrease in number served is the change in policy limiting shelter stay to a strict 90 days. This policy change has allowed an increased length of stay in the shelter, which has improved outcomes such as the percentage of households that leave the shelter into permanent housing. Crossroads Housing provides case management services where they work with a case manager to set up a plan to resolve housing challenges.

One of the main barriers to housing is affordable housing stock. Other barriers that people face in moving from homelessness to permanent housing are poor credit, income that is inadequate for the private rental market, history of eviction/poor rental references, criminal history, and income that is not sufficient in meeting income standards that a tenant earns three times the rent.

Numbers Served 7/1/2016 – 6/30/2017															
All Clients Served 2016-2017 Grant Year	Households	Individuals			Adults			Youth (18-24)			Children			Fleeing DV	Veteran
	29	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	4	1
		38	56	0	12	23	0	1	4	0	25	29	0		
Totals:	94	35			5			54			4	1			
Chronically Homeless Served 2016-2017 Grant Year	Households	Individuals			Adults			Youth (18-24)			Children			Fleeing DV	Veteran
	9	28			11			0			17				1
	31.03%	29.78%			31.43%			0			31.48%				100 %

Transitional Housing - Crossroads

Transitional housing is conceptualized as an intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. It is a more long-term, service-intensive and private than emergency shelters, yet remains time-limited to stays of up to two years. It is meant to provide a safe, supportive environment where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to homelessness or kept them homeless, and begin to rebuild their support network. Transitional housing is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support (for addictions and mental health, for instance), life skills, and in some cases, education and training.

Crossroads operates two transitional housing programs. A five-unit complex supported through the local document recording fees and a scattered site program funded through HUD's Continuum of Care Program (CoC). The aim of transitional housing projects administered through Crossroads Housing is to transition families, either from the community or the family shelter, into a setting that prepares and trains them for the time when they will leave homeless services and will live/rent on their own in the community. While families are able to stay in the transitional housing program for up to two years, this timeframe is not intended to be the norm. It does allow for those whom are assessed as having more complex and significant barriers and who may require more time to work through those barriers. It is the objective that households leaving the transitional housing program transition into permanent and stable housing. This housing should be such that they have a maximum chance at sustaining without a return to needing services in the future. Because of this main objective, some households may require longer length-of-stay than others.

Households served through the five-unit transitional housing program for the 2016-2017 grant year are as represented in the table below with basic demographics such as adults versus children and information for how many households served were chronically homeless prior to entry.

Numbers Served										
All Clients Served 2016-2017 Grant Year	Households	Individuals	Adults			Children			Fleeing DV	Veteran
	6	17	M	F	T	M	F	T	3 HH	0
			2	6	0	2	7	0		
Totals:	17	8	9			3	0			
Chronically Homeless Served 2016-2017 Grant Year	Households	Individuals	Adults			Children			Fleeing DV	Veteran
	2	7	3			4			1	0
	33.33%	41.18%	37.50%			44.44%			33.33%	0

While fewer households were served in 2016 – 2017, the emphasis on stability and more intensive case management services drastically improved the “percent to exit” or the ratio of how many families moved into permanent housing solutions.

2015-2016		2016-2017	
Households Served: 9		Households Served: 6	
Average Length of Stay:	Percent Exiting to Permanent housing:	Average Length of Stay:	Percent Exit to Permanent Housing:
367 days	40%	591 days	100%

Crossroads other Transitional housing program is funded solely through the HUD CoC and is a “scattered-site” transitional housing program. This means that Crossroads rents homes throughout the community on behalf of the clients we serve on this program for short periods of time until they can address their barriers and get into their own permanent housing. The numbers of families served on the HUD CoC transitional housing program from July 2016 to June 2017 were as follows:

HUD Continuum of Care Transitional Housing Scattered Site Program Numbers Served:									
Households	Adults				Children				Fleeing DV
11 HH	Total	M	F	O	Total	M	F	O	2 HH
	15	4	11	0	29	16	13	0	
Percent Exit to Permanent Housing: 66%					Percent Exit to other than literally homeless: 83.33%				

During the 2016-2017 grant year, the number served was less and the length of stay in the Henry transitional housing program went up significantly. However, percent exit to permanent housing did rise significantly as well. As our case management has shifted to more of a mentoring model, we are experiencing fewer clients leaving the program due to issues with following program rules. In 2015-2016, one whole household consisting of five individuals, and two additional individuals from other households were asked to leave the program based on rules violations. Though individuals and households may still be asked to leave the Henry program if they refuse to comply with safety issues, we have found that nobody has had to this program year. The table that follows shows the main barriers faced by the six households in the five-plex transitional housing program:

2016-2017 Barriers Faced by Number of Households				
Substance Abuse	Domestic Violence	Criminal History	Eviction Bad Rental Reference	Income Below 15% AMI
5 HH	4 HH	2 HH	4 HH	5 HH

Of these households:

- 3 enrolled into or completed chemical dependency treatment programs.
- Four households engaged with services at Turning Pointe for Domestic Violence advocacy.
- 2 households stayed in compliance with DOC and one finished their DOC probationary period.
- One household found housing even with a past eviction and one is making payments on theirs. The other households are working on other aspects of their credit.

- 3 Households increased income- either through employment or social security benefits. 2 additional households enrolled into job training programs
- Additionally, 4 households have adults that have enrolled into college or trade school.

SafetyNet Program: Rapid Re-Housing / Rental Assistance – Crossroads Housing

The Housing SafetyNet program began in 2007 and works in conjunction with the Rapid Rehousing Program funded by the Consolidated Homeless Grant to support and/or supplement rental assistance, deposits, or utilities for persons that are literally homeless or in immediate danger of becoming homeless. The program targets persons with an annual household income that is 30% below the Area Median Income. Eligibility is assessed by the program manager and is based on a vulnerability index score and prioritization within the community.

Safety Net Rental Assistance-County Wide				
	Individuals	Adults	Children	Households
2015-2016	143	67	76	49
2016-2017	124	61	63	47
% Change	-13%	-4%	-15%	-4%

Out of the 47 households served this past year, 7 (14.8%) were from North Mason. 21 of the 47 (44.68%) households were literally homeless and achieved permanent housing because of the SafetyNet program. The process for rental assistance is being centralized in this next fiscal year to serve more households. The amount of income and lack of housing stock remain the greatest challenges for people to become permanently housed.

Housing Options for Students in Transition (HOST): Youth

The Mason County HOST program has been in existence for five years and became a 501(C)(3) in July of 2016. Mason County HOST is a transitional housing program that matches unaccompanied homeless youth ages 16 to 21 with HOST homes to resolve the issue of youth homelessness while obtaining their education in the Mason County area. The program then provides intensive case management to manage all other issues in the life of the youth. Mason County HOST provides employment services as well as post-high school/college planning. The program teaches independent living services to assure that independent living happens responsibly and thoroughly.

Mason County HOST operates three primary programs; transitional housing matching, diversion and street outreach. Transitional housing matches unaccompanied homeless youth with HOST home matches and eliminates homelessness. Diversion targets students who are not yet homeless and or their families are close to homelessness. In addition, diversion targets students whom have dropped out of school and reengages them back into the educational system. Street Outreach targets literally homeless students whom are in or out of the educational system and are not receiving services to mitigate homelessness.

Through funding from Mason County and other sources, HOST was able to house 45 youth under the age of 24 in HOST Homes. 17 students entered the school year without medical insurance. In addition to obtaining medical insurance for students, HOST case management specific to systems supports (DSHS, SSA, Medicaid, Medicare, CPS), employment support (job search, resume building and employment supports for students with disabilities). Students exiting the program from HOST homes went into college dorms, first time independent leases,

rooms for rent, remained as family members in HOST homes and employment related housing. 32% of students went into college dorms. 12% of students went into first time independent leases. 12% went into rooms for rent. 12% remained as HOST home family members. 4% went into employment based housing.

Mason County HOST is working to partner with Community Youth Services to begin working on street outreach. Both agencies will work in tandem to recognize youth experiencing homelessness that are not receiving services and provide some case management and information and referral to that population of youth. Both Community Youth Services and Mason County HOST feel that this will be a sustainable model that each agency will be able to partner on and will have a direct outcome on youth homelessness in Mason County.

Community Lifeline

Community Lifeline is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit agency providing meals, emergency cold weather shelter, showers and hygiene item distribution, case management services, education and resources to help those in need in the Shelton, Mason County community.

Community Meals Program: Community Lifeline is the only agency providing meals 365 days per year in Mason County. Meals are served by over 250 volunteers from 18 churches and community organizations every night from 5-6 PM and 5:30-6:30 on weekends. The Community Meals Program served over 34,000 meals to the unemployed, underemployed, homeless, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities, and families with children. This is an increase of 3,000 meals over the previous year.

Cold Weather Shelter: Community Lifeline operates the only shelter in Mason County providing service to adult individuals. The shelter has a capacity of 35 beds with separate areas, so males and female adults have a safe place to sleep. An Emergency Cold Weather Shelter provided 2105 shelter beds to 200 unduplicated individual adults from November 1st thru April 30th when the wind chill reaches 35 degrees and below from 8 PM to 8AM for adult individuals. 15 – 20 people typically stayed in the shelter each night with the average age around 53.

Many people chose not to stay in a shelter. Because the shelter has limited storage and may not be open consecutive nights due to varying weather, they fear their belongings left back in camp will be stolen.

Funding has been provided for this next fiscal year to keep the shelter open for 90 consecutive days regardless of temperature and work on improving storage space to achieve 100% capacity.

Shower and Hygiene Program: The Shower and Hygiene Item Distribution Program operates from 10-2 on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday and provides guests with a hot shower, hygiene items including soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, shaving cream and razors, combs, toothbrushes and toothpaste, socks, and underwear. Towels are provided and are laundered by a team of volunteers from United Methodist Church who pick them up daily. This program meets the needs of dignity, health and safety.

Case Management Services: Case management provides services to approximately 300 households including individual adults and 31 families with children referred by other agencies to connect to resources including rental assistance. 200 unduplicated individuals were guests in the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter from November 1st thru April 30th. 85% of guests staying

in the shelter report income from zero to \$735 per month and, in addition to low income, report barriers to housing as addiction, mental illness, and criminal backgrounds. 15% of shelter guests have incomes under \$1499, the 50% poverty line, and are underemployed, suffer from mental illness, addiction, criminal backgrounds, and barriers to housing. Three guests became gainfully employed and increased gross wages to approximately \$1760 per month at a mill through a Temp agency. Although they are employed, there are barriers to them becoming considered permanent hires with benefits. These individuals are living with family members and working to catch up on legal commitments. Many people work under the table jobs such as landscaping or parking lot maintenance for spending money that would not sustain housing and have barriers to employment such as criminal background.

Community Lifeline serves some of the most vulnerable and hardest to serve people experiencing homelessness. The reasons for homelessness among the people served at Community Lifeline are:

- Mental Illness
- Addiction
- Job Loss
- Estrangement from Family
- Fleeing Domestic Violence
- Change in Relationship Status
- Medical Emergency

North Mason Resources:

North Mason Resources (NMR) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and opened for services in 2009. Their mission is: "Navigators to a Better Life". The objective is to help each client achieve self-sufficiency; partner with appropriate public and private organizations to meet the mission; raise the overall health of our community; reduce the number of homeless individuals in our area; act as a conduit of supplies and information to individuals and entities within our community; and, become a community where citizens care enough to work in cooperation to help those in need.

NMR partners with other providers to offer the following services to economically challenged households: Outreach, by offering clothing to adults and children, "care kits," camping supplies, propane, shower tokens, laundry/fuel vouchers, and emergency food/food cards; homeless advocacy/case management; homeless/housing crisis/prevention services; young adult work experience program; and, in-house providers for mental health (BHR, Adonai,) Veteran services (DAV,) employment services (WorkSource WA,) and financial education/loans (PCU.) One of the main barriers to housing people quickly is that the typical person experiencing homelessness has an average income of approximately \$700 per month. When the standard rent for a 1-bedroom apartment is \$650 per month, this only leaves \$50 per month for other living expenses. Another top barrier to housing people quickly is lack of rentals, strict guidelines for qualification - no evictions, no criminal history, good credit, and household must earn 3-times the amount of rent.

According to the data collected during the past year, the DAV Veteran Officer had 185 contacts with Veterans, and 8 of them were literally homeless. Of the 8 individuals that represent 7 households that are literally homeless veterans, 3 households were stably housed at exit. All 5 of the Veterans that returned to homelessness were by choice. Of the 185 Veteran contacts, 63

were for VA disability claims, 35 were for VAF claims, and 18 were medical referrals. The DAV Officer facilitated 3 Veteran Stand Downs during the past year. The DAV Officer noted that many Veterans do not seek out services as they have a difficult time asking for help. NMR and the Veteran Officer hope to continue to work on relationship building, and continue to gain trust in the Veteran community, so that more Veterans will access services in the future.

Of the 53 homeless and imminently households noted in the table below, 22 were stably housed at exit. 5 households were in a housing program, such as transitional living and subsidized housing, and 13 returned to homelessness. Of the 13 that returned to homelessness, 10 were by choice, as they did not want to abide by the restrictions of a temporary housing situations such a shelter. Of the remaining 3 that returned to homelessness, one is on a waiting list in Thurston County, and the other two are working with a case manager to become housed. Of the 32 receiving case management, the 3 biggest challenges clients are faced with are identifying housing, employment/better employment, and connecting with behavioral health providers.

Total Number of ENROLLED Households Seeking Services by Category 2016-2017										
Type:	Households		Individuals		Adults		Youth		Children	
Literally Homeless	53		69		57		5		7	
Fleeing DV	7		12		7				5	
Imminently at Risk	15		26		20		0		6	
At Risk, Stably Housed or Other	15		30		20		0		10	
Male or Female:	H of H		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	M	F								
	41	43	61	66	46	52	4	1	11	13
Total Seeking Services:	84		127		98		5		24	
Veterans	HH		Individuals		Male		Female			
	Literally Homeless		8		7		1			
	Not Literally Homeless		2		2		0			
	Totals		10		9		1			

Household Make-Up							
Single Male	Single Female		Couple, no children	Couple with Children	Single Mom		
34	25		9	7	8		
Outcomes for Total Households Seeking Services by Category							
Literally Homeless /Fleeing DV				Not Homeless			
Stably Housed	In Housing Program	Returned to Homelessness	CM	Prevention	CM	Diversion	
22	5	13	32	18	12	Data NC	
NON-ENROLLED SSO/HP (Not Imminent by Def. or Literally Homeless)							
HH	HP	No Qualify HSN	Turn-Away	Diversion			
97	27	11	9	61			

Turning Pointe Survivor Advocacy Center

Domestic violence and sexual assault are a regular occurrence in our region. Intimate-partner violence is one of the top reasons for homelessness in Mason County. It is not only the victim of the assault that suffers the psychological and/or physical trauma; the children and other family members are impacted as well, which in turn appears to affect the entire community. Survivors, most who are women, aged 25-65, are forced to flee their homes, have little to no support system and have often been kept from gainful employment by their abuser and trauma. They, and their families, face imminent homelessness and remain vulnerable to other abuses in the immediate aftermath of leaving an abuser.

According to the 2016 National Domestic Violence Counts Annual Census hosted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, in Washington State there were 732 unmet requests for services in one day of which 87% (637) were for housing.

Turning Pointe Survivor Advocacy Center provides free and confidential services for survivors of Domestic and/or Sexual violence. Their mission is to provide safety and support for survivors through advocacy, prevention education and action for social change. It is the 3rd largest DV Shelter in Washington State with 54 beds. In the upcoming fiscal year, two rooms will be dedicated as extended stay to allow people more than 90 days of stay to increase the outcome of leaving into permanent housing. There is at least one advocate on site 24 hours a day.

Turning Pointe works to break the cycle of abuse, violence and homelessness by equipping Mason County survivors of intimate-partner violence with the immediate basic needs to avoid homelessness. In addition to immediate shelter, we provide advocacy-based, client-led counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, support groups, parenting classes, information and referral, youth advocacy, housing search support, extended shelter stays, and intimate-

partner violence prevention education. It is not a requirement to be a resident of the shelter to receive services.

Turning Pointe Survivor Advocacy Center	7/1/16 - 6/30/17
Total number of Crisis Calls	799
Total number of request to stay in the shelter	335
Total number of unduplicated adults that stayed in the shelter	202
Total number of unduplicated children that stayed in the shelter	162
Total number of unduplicated Veterans that stayed in the shelter	3
Total number of unduplicated households that stayed in the shelter	202
Total number of non-residential households receiving services	201
Occupancy Rate (% utilization)	100
Average length of stay (days)	39

Northwest Resources II, Inc. – SOS Program

Northwest Resources II, Inc. (NWRII) is a Washington State Behavioral Health Organization with the following mission: “With an unyielding commitment to provide clinical excellence, extraordinary service and compassionate care to individuals and families”.

NWRII provides Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment, Mental Health (MH) treatment and Case Management services to individuals and families in both Thurston and Mason Counties. NWRII provides outpatient SUD and MH treatment and operates a 16-bed, inpatient SUD treatment facility in Shelton, WA. SUD is a major public health problem which impacts society on many levels: The National Institute on Drug Addiction (NIDA) estimates the costs of Substance Abuse in the United States is approximately \$484 billion, as compared to \$171.6 billion for cancer and \$131.7 for diabetes. Local jails house many incarcerated individuals suffering from SUD challenges, MH challenges or both (Co-Occurring disorders).

NWRII developed the SOS Program to meet individuals “where they are” (jails, Department of Corrections Offices, Emergency Rooms, Shelters, Social Services Providers, streets, etc.) and assess needs, make referrals and assist individuals in attaining treatment or transition out of treatment. This program is funded through the local 1/10 of 1% Sales and Use Tax which is also known as the Treatment Sales Tax. It is important to mention this information in this report because these funds contribute to a housing component of the SOS program for individuals actively involved in SUD and/or MH treatment. Housing provides motivation and stability for individuals to engage in treatment and stay in treatment, therefore improving retention and overall individual success toward recovery. The longer individuals remain in services, the better the long-term outcomes. The following table summarizes the number of people served from 7/1/16 – 6/30/17 through this program and some of the results.

Demographics	Number Served
Total Households	216
Adults	214
Youth	2
Veterans	6
Males	126
Females	90
Accessed Mental Health Treatment	132
Accessed Substance Abuse Treatment	168
Accessed BOTH MH & SA Treatment	84
Did not complete Treatment	49
Number of people Homeless (HUD definition) at intake	118
Number placed in temporary or transitional housing (Oxford House, rooms for rent, etc)	74
Number placed in permanent housing	28
Number of individuals that remained homeless	24
Number that obtained employment	38
Number approved for Social Security Benefits	7

A variety of factors cause homelessness and serve as barriers to obtain housing. Overall, there are few housing options in our community. The people seeking services with NWRH face barriers to housing which include poor rental history/evictions, criminal history, low credit scores, lack of or insufficient income, and lack of employment. A person's history can become an obstacle when finding a place to live. The people in treatment are faced with mental health and/or chemical dependency issues which require a higher level of supportive, clean and sober housing. Only two Oxford Houses are in Mason County demonstrating a need for more when compared to the number in treatment that remains homeless. In addition, many of NWRH's clients have a physical disability which reduces their ability to live independently and increases the need for supportive housing and/or in-home care.

Success Stories

Crossroads Housing - Family Shelter: The most memorable client story from the past year involves a couple with one son who have been homeless and using heroin for the better part of the past four years. They have camped outdoors while trying to get their son to school every day. They have never successfully accessed services in the past due to an inability to call and check in as formerly required (a good example of how our new CES is eliminating the phenomenon of those most able accessing services, as opposed to those now being most in-need accessing services). This family has been open about their addiction issues, and for that reason, we worked with them to create a plan of accountability in order to begin to deal with the issue. At this time, they have been clean for three months (a milestone, considering their history); he has completed inpatient treatment upon his own request; she is attending outpatient; and is also working successfully within the community. Both are healthy, much happier, and their self-esteem is growing along with their confidence that they can live

independently soon. We have moved them onto our HUD transitional housing project to allow them stable housing while they further work to attain viable income so that they will be self-sufficient by or before program end.

Crossroads Housing – Transitional Housing Program: One family came into our program on 10/27/2016; they are being housed in their own rental as of 7/1/2017. At entry, this family had a gross monthly income of \$1,362.25; at exit, their income is \$3,814.91. This is a difference of \$2,452.66. While on our program, they accessed programs such as the Financial Literacy Program and credit counseling. They also worked with Peninsula Credit Union to get bank accounts. This couple went to various job fairs together, held by WorkSource and other community events. The mother completed the Community Jobs program and, in turn, established a good work history, which led to her being hired permanently. The father was able to complete the High School 21 program through Sound Learning, which earned him a diploma. They learned about new resources for which their family was eligible, such as A Gift for Special Children, Community Action Council's energy assistance programs, and the AREN Grant through DSHS. They have learned great communication skills. I am now able to watch these young parents actively problem solve for their family.

Crossroads Housing - SafetyNet Program: One family that accessed Safety Net Funds the past year came to us with a horrific story. The mom who was the main bread-winner in the family had developed brain cancer and was unable to work. Her daughter also had a heart-condition which was being treated. Her husband found a job, but they were threatened with eviction and struggling to get out from under the rental debt that they had obtained. Staff were able to match the family with a local program that helps families that have children with special needs. This agency was able to help the family catch up on some of their bills while Crossroads assisted with prevention funding to prevent them from becoming homeless. This family is now stably housed and able to face their health-related crisis without the added stress of facing housing crisis as well.

HOST: Graduated every child that was eligible for graduation and enrolled in the HOST program. Of those students that graduated all are permanently housed. All students able to work are employed and learning how to mitigate intergenerational poverty. All HOST students have savings accounts and are practicing money management skills. HOST fundraised \$10,000.00 this year towards a matching grant to support students and their families with deposits and some rental supports. HOST began an active diversion/reengagement program that has successfully had 15 students in the last year enroll in school and work towards graduating.

Community Lifeline (1): A 68-year-old man, who has lived in Mason County his whole life, estranged from his family members, was living in a motor home and using Community Lifeline services of meals and showers. He was a vulnerable adult being taken advantage of by many people he thought were his friends on the streets however were using his debit card to get his money and eventually conned him into buying a motor home which people would take off in leaving him on the streets. He developed signs of memory loss, confusion, lack of mobility, and loss of bodily functions often arriving at Community Lifeline soiled and needing clean clothing and a shower. Community Lifeline staff, case management, and volunteers worked with him to support his needs including finding him a primary care physician, collaborating with Home and Family services to qualify him for long term care housing, keeping fresh clothing available for him as well as encouraging him to wear adult briefs, laundering his soiled clothing, scheduling and taking him to medical appointments and hospital visits, advocating and protecting him from people who were taking advantage of him in collaboration with the Shelton Police Department,

Mason General Hospital, DSHS, Home and Family Services, and Adult Protective Services over the course of a six month period. Today, he is placed in a long-term nursing care facility in Kitsap County, is no longer being preyed upon for his money, and is receiving wonderful care. He looks healthy however continues to deteriorate. Case management continues to be his emergency contact and the facility calls if something comes up or if he is having a clear day, can remember us, and wants to visit.

Community Lifeline (2): A young woman in her 30's who came to us a year ago, homeless, with a husband and young son, with a history of addiction as a part of the TANF Program Community Jobs program. CLL provided a worksite, job description, and supervision while TANF provided the wages. She worked in the Shower Program office and provided reception needs 26 hours per week. Shortly after starting she and her family became housed at Crossroads Transitional Housing for 90 days which was extended to 180 days because of lack of housing stock and then the intent for a landlord to rent to them when the property became vacant. Both she and her husband suffer from a history of addiction and both relapsed, she almost died after someone dumped her out of a car at the Crossroads Shelter where staff sought out medical attention for her. An intensive plan and staffing was held with Crossroads, Community Lifeline, Northwest Resources, and DSHS to support the family by putting them in housing and treatment programs while she continued to work at Community Lifeline with a flexible schedule. During the year she and her husband met many milestones including education and treatment, Crossroads securing housing for them, she is moving up in training programs, taking care of legal issues. Community Lifeline has recently hired her as staff, they continue to meet recovery goals and have found positive activities in the community, are healing from trauma, and are moving forward to becoming independent setting family goals and aspirations. She has a gift for working in social services and a story of her own to share with people. She is employed 26 hours per week connecting people with resources and acts as a CLL team member. We continue to support hers and the family's efforts and goals including encouraging her to go to school and get more training in the field. The wages she is earning are supporting the quality of life of a family that is moving forward as they continue to be a part of the Community Lifeline family.

North Mason Resources (1): NMR has made a positive impact on many people's lives. With prevention services, we were able to help a senior couple who faced 3 critical medical crises within 6 months remain in their home and divert eviction. They live on \$1,100 per month income, and their rent alone is \$636. They were imminently homeless 3 times in 6 months. We also assisted them with developing a stable housing plan, and they will be relocating out of state in September to be closer to family where they have more help.

North Mason Resources (2): During the past year, NMR referred several families to a family shelter, and 4 of those families secured employment, increased household income, and are in stable housing. NMR is working with a mentally ill homeless client with evictions, and substance abuse issues, who is also known to be challenging to work with by most providers in the community. They are unwilling to go in to a temporary shelter in Mason County. Through several diversion conversations regarding options, NMR staff learned that this person wanted to attend higher education courses in another county. We researched temporary housing options in Thurston County. This person is reportedly no longer using substances (behavior reflects the change,) is on the waiting list for 2 temporary housing opportunities, and is in process of applying for college enrollment.

Turning Pointe Survivor Advocacy Center: Client A came to us by referral from another agency. When she arrived, her child had been taken away by CPS because she failed to

provide a safe environment. Her child had witnessed to the DV going on in the home. After attending our support groups and parenting classes, this client realized the severity of her situation and decided to take ownership of her life and her situation. This client had never had meaningful employment, so she worked diligently with her Advocate to address the barriers she was facing, even doing pretend interviews and picking out what to wear. To her credit she was able to obtain employment. (She is now working TWO jobs!) She continued working with her Advocate and was able to find housing with one of the landlords we work with regularly. We were excited to be able to help her with the move in fees and deposit monies. It was just that one time help that she needed to get over the hill. She has now regained FULL custody of her child and still comes to chat with an advocate in times of worry to help her develop strong boundaries and coping skills.

Northwest Resources II, Inc. – SOS Program (1): A female individual suffering from severe mental illness engaged in our SOS Program, looking for employment. She was receiving SSA benefits, but they were not sufficient to cover her expenses. Our Case Manager referred her to Behavioral Health Resources to begin Mental Health Treatment. We also coordinated care with the Department of Social and Health Services – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation where she received training to work with other individuals suffering from mental health challenges. She is currently working as a mental health case manager/counselor.

Northwest Resources II, Inc. – SOS Program (2): Our Case Manager encountered a male individual during assertive outreach on the streets in Shelton. He was invited back to the SOS Program office and enrolled in the program. He had been using drugs for many years and by the end of the conversation agreed to begin SUD treatment. Our Case Manager coordinated care with Behavioral Health Resources and Northwest Resources II, Inc. He began outpatient treatment with NWR II, but was discharged due to certain behaviors. We coordinated care with the client's father, and were able to enroll him in services with BHR. He is now engaged in treatment, owns a small construction business and is renting his own place.

Northwest Resources II, Inc. – SOS Program (3): Our Case Manager encountered a female individual with numerous legal issues and SUD treatment needs. We coordinated care with an SUD inpatient facility, which she engaged with and graduated from. We were then able to find her placement in an oxford house and help her apply for SSA benefits. She graduated from outpatient SUD treatment, completed all Department of Corrections requirements and transitioned into low income housing. She also begins employment next month.

Mason County staff would like to thank all the non-profit organizations for their assistance in providing data and descriptions of programs and services to make this comprehensive report possible.