

Goal #1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

Why is this Goal Area Important?

Having each person's basic needs met for food, shelter and clothing is critical for people to thrive and grow, and vital for a healthy community.

This is particularly true for children, as studies have shown a correlation between poor academic performance and a child's food and/or housing insecurity. Adults, too, are better able to achieve wage progression and self-sufficiency when basic needs are provided.

What's Working?

- In 2008, 3,187,579 pounds of food were distributed to clients through Hopelink food banks. In addition, 3,601 emergency bags of food were distributed outside of food bank distribution hours.¹
- In 2007, the YWCA opened a daytime drop-in center for homeless women in downtown Bellevue. This program was the result of a community-wide initiative to learn more about homelessness among single women – a group for whom there are little to no services available on the Eastside. In 2007, the center served 52 unduplicated women. In 2008, this figure jumped to 182. The Center had already served 98 unduplicated women in the first three months of 2009.

Food Security and Hunger Prevalence

- In November 2009 the United States Department of Agriculture released a report indicating that 14.6% of households in the U.S. were food insecure at least some time during the year, the highest recorded level of food insecurity since 1995. Food insecurity is defined as not having access to enough food at all times for an active and healthy life. In Washington State, the prevalence

of household food insecurity was 11.1% (2006-2008 average). This is a decline of 2.1 percentage points from the 1996-98 average. Updated county and region level data are not yet available.²

- In 2008, 13.1% of King County eighth graders say that at least one month in the past year their family had to reduce the size of or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food. Nearly 20% of tenth graders and 21.4% of twelfth graders were aware of this happening in their household. The percentages for eighth and tenth grades are slightly higher than those from the same survey administered in 2006 but the differences are not statistically significant.³
- Another measure of community need in the area of food security is the percentage of students who receive free and reduced-cost lunch. According to Bellevue School District, the total percentage of students qualifying for lunch assistance has remained relatively steady until this year. Over a ten year period, the percentage peaked at 19.2% during the 2004-05 school year. It remained steady at 19.1% in 2005-06 and 18.8% in 2006-07. As of October 2009, however, the school district reported this figure to be 20.8%.
- There are ten schools in the district with more than 30% of students eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches, and 16 of the district schools reported that at least 20% of their students qualified.⁴
- In Spring 2009, Feeding America (formerly Second Harvest) released a report which found that 19% of Washington children do not have enough nutritious food.⁵

Service Trends

Food Banks, Food Stamps and Meal Programs

- The Renewal Food Bank in Bellevue reported service volume was up over 30% in March 2009 relative to the preceding year. February 2009 was the busiest month the food bank had seen in eleven years of operation, with volumes expected to increase.⁶
- Hopelink saw a 32% increase in food bank participation from April 2008 to April 2009. Between late 2007 and April 2009, this figure is a 47% increase. During this time, Hopelink saw a decrease in the requests for emergency food bags. They theorize that as some emergency food bag clients begin to regard their economic situation as a long-term challenge, they move to enroll in food bank services in which they plan to participate on a regular basis.
- Emergency Feeding Program (EFP) of Seattle and King County provides emergency food bags through distribution partners (faith groups, schools, etc.). EFP reported that there was a 47% increase in orders from its countywide distribution partners in the last quarter of 2008 over the same period in 2007, and an 86% increase in January 2009 over the same month in 2008. On the Eastside, these distribution partners requested 30% more bags in the last quarter of 2008 versus the same period in 2007. By March 2009, the Eastside saw an overall increase in requests of 56% over the previous year.⁷
- The Salvation Army operates a weeknight meal program in the Crossroads neighborhood. Program staff report that the number of those served has grown from an average of 50 people per night in 2008 to between 70 and 90 people per night in March 2009.⁸
- Senior Services of Seattle/King County operates senior congregate meal programs at several sites across the county, with at least seven sites in North and East King County, including the North Bellevue Community

Center. Of 6,584 clients reported in 2007, 85% had incomes below 50% of the median. Senior Services expects that increases in food and gas prices significantly impact seniors on fixed incomes, resulting in increased demand for meal programs.⁹

- Of the 13 faith-based organizations on the Eastside who completed surveys in 2009 about the services they provide to the community, most mentioned some type of

"We have seen our number increase over the past year and are now seeing a change in socio-economic backgrounds. People who have never asked for assistance are reluctantly and discreetly seeking help."

Faith Communities Survey-St. Luke's Lutheran Church

food assistance, through food banks, meal programs, or referrals to other agencies that provide food. Requests related to food were listed as the top requests made to their organization, followed by rental assistance and gas vouchers.

- On October 1, 2008, the Food Stamp Program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP, a federal program to provide free food vouchers to low-income people, is a critical support to combat hunger. In the past, many people didn't participate because they didn't know they were eligible. A study by the Food Research and Action Center released in October 2008 reveals that about 57% of all individuals in King County who were eligible for food stamps received benefits in 2006. Participation rates ranged widely across the nation, from a low of 29% in the San Diego, California metro area to a high of 98% in Detroit, Michigan.
- SNAP enrollment in Washington State has increased significantly every year from 350,373 in 2002 to 581,001 in 2008.¹⁰ As of October 2009, a record 12.8% of the State's population - about 885,000 people - were on food stamps. This increase is due to two factors: the economy and expanded eligibility for the program, which the State

began in October 2008. As of October 2009, nine percent of the population receives food stamps; 17% of those are children.¹¹

- The number of Bellevue residents participating in SNAP (called the Basic Food Assistance Program in Washington State) has fluctuated over the years. In 2003, 3,879 Bellevue residents benefited from Basic Food Assistance. In 2005, that number rose to 5,117, an increase of 32%. During those two years, the overall population of Bellevue changed by less than 1%.¹² This figure decreased to 4,152 in 2007, but with the current economic downturn, this number is expected to increase.¹³

Emergency Financial Assistance

- Emergency financial assistance continues to be a need for low- to moderate-income Bellevue residents. Local service providers of emergency assistance, such as the Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Solid Ground and Hopelink, report that supply for rent and utility assistance are not keeping up with the demand. Several programs run out of funds prior to the end of the year. Those that don't typically cap the amount of funding provided to each household in order to stretch the resources across more families. This practice can result in households needing to visit two or three different service providers in order to assemble the total amount of funds needed to address their emergency need. In Spring 2009, to address this situation, emergency providers such as Catholic Community Services, Hopelink, and Salvation Army began meeting to develop a coordinated system to minimize this burden for those seeking assistance.
- Combined, the agencies listed above reported that they provided services to 4,649 Bellevue residents in 2008. Primarily, assistance came in the form of one-time rental or mortgage assistance to avoid eviction or foreclosure. Other types of assistance included help with utility bills, car repairs, prescription drug costs and food vouchers.
- In 2008, the City of Bellevue Utility Discount Program provided utility discounts and rebates for 1,048 low-income seniors and disabled residents who receive water, sewer and drainage services from the City of Bellevue. The Utility Tax Rebate Program provides refunds of utility taxes to low-income Bellevue residents. In 2008, tax relief was provided to 1,064 residents.¹⁴
- In March 2009, Catholic Community Services saw an increase in first-time users of its emergency services. They attribute this to recent layoffs and work hour reductions. They also observed an increase in the number of pregnant women seeking assistance, some of whom have reported difficulties in finding work because they are pregnant. For those seeking rental assistance, the average amount owed is about \$800.
- Hopelink served 54% more clients from April 2008 to April 2009, with 81% more funds. The increase is attributable to increased federal funding for the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This short-term increase is expected to be reduced back to 2008 levels, resulting in a significant reduction in service in 2010. For the same period, Hopelink also saw a 44.4% increase in clients requesting service when they have a 24-hour shut-off notice. Hopelink reports that many are clients who have not accessed LIHEAP before.
- The Housing Stability Program is offered across King County with the exception of Seattle and Kent. By November 2008, this program served 268 households during the year, including 129 in East King County zip codes and 88 in Bellevue. A total of

"The need has increased and clients who previously could afford their utility bills or other bills are unable to pay their bills. Same applies to staff- we have seen staff requesting services they need to provide their clients."

Provider Survey, Refugee Womens Alliance

\$148,061 was provided to Eastside clients. About, 41% were provided with move-in assistance and 55% were provided with eviction prevention assistance.¹⁵

Homelessness

Prevalence

Data on Homelessness from One Night Count

- Each year, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness conducts a one night count of the homeless to provide a snapshot of the problem and to track trends over time. This annual effort, which began over 25 years ago with a street count of unsheltered people in parts of Seattle, has now grown to include parts of North, South and East King County. The count found a total of 2,827 individuals sleeping unsheltered and outside on January 30, 2009.
- The total number of unsheltered individuals found during the count increased by 2% between 2008 and 2009. Count teams rode ‘night owl’ buses throughout the County to assess how many people find shelter on late night, long-run busses. This led to the discovery of 171 individuals using this method of shelter.
- A total of 158 unsheltered individuals were counted in Urban East King County (including portions of Bellevue, Kirkland

“Most urgent need -Affordable housing in Bellevue. We have more families living in cars and tent city this year. Many people have no where to go.”
Provider Survey, Bellevue School District, Human Services Specialist Program

and Redmond). About half were residing in Tent City 4. Of the remaining, most individuals were counted sleeping in vehicles, with others found under bridges, or in or around structures. The count of individuals,

not including Tent City residents, increased on the Eastside from 2008 to 2009. However, it is not known if this increase was due to the higher number of people, improved counting techniques, or some combination of both.

- The *One Night Count* also includes a comprehensive survey of shelters and transitional housing use on that night throughout King County. Of the total number of households which reported a last address in the survey, 192, or 6%, listed East King County as their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless.

Individuals by household type and type of program		
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing
Families with children	715	2,598
Single men	1,358	663
Single women	465	302
Unaccompanied minors	14	13
Couples without children	0	6
Subtotal	2,552	3,582
Total number of people		6,134

Source: http://www.kingcounty.gov/socialservices/Housing/PlansAndReports/HCD_Reports.aspx

- Of the clients countywide where length and frequency of homelessness is known, 56% of households reported being homeless the first time on the night of the count in January 2009. Another 23% reported that it was their second episode. Also, 44% reported being homeless for six months or less with another 18% homeless less than 11 months. In other words, the majority of homeless individuals in King County are experiencing homelessness for the first time and have not been homeless for an extended period of time.
- Of the 6,134 people staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing on the night

“Barrier: Inability to qualify for access to financial support, e.g. there are barriers to accessing TANF and other financial resources for our clients.”
Community Conversation, Eastside Domestic Violence Program Staff

of the count, 2,031 were children under the age of 18, and 203 were over the age of 65.

- 1,318 people accessing shelter and transitional housing programs reported experiencing violence or abuse within the last year. About half of these people (674) were adults, with the remaining 644 being children.
- The number of homeless households that have employment is lower than in recent years. By 2007, the percentage of those included in the survey who reported being employed was 13%. Though the figure in 2009 is higher at 18%, this is lower than the figure in 2003 (26%).¹⁶
- In Summer 2008, the Safe Harbors project released an annual report for data gathered in 2007. Countywide, the Safe Harbors Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) collected data from 170 participating interim housing programs and services for about 9,000 individuals. The programs entering data represent 87% of all homeless beds in the county. Having an HMIS in place is a requirement of both federal and state funding sources for homeless housing and services.
- In the individual service system, nearly 1,800 women were served.
- About 42% of the single individuals and 17% of family members are Caucasian – compared to a general King County demographic of 75.9%. African-Americans were the largest ethnic minority in the system at 25% of the single individuals and 35% of the family members. About 15% identified themselves as veterans, compared to about 10% in the general county population.¹⁷
- About 8% of young adults and 11% of families indicated that their last permanent residence was on the Eastside.
- The mean age of children served was eight years. About 66% are school-age, while about 34% are under age five, each age group having particular needs relative to education, parenting, health care, and childcare.
- Only 12% of those served identified their level of education. More than 40% of single

individuals and 36% of adults in family households did not have either a high school diploma or GED. This is in contrast to the King County population, at five percent.

Service Trends

Committee To End Homelessness: The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

- In 2005, the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, a collaboration including homeless individuals, local governments, human services, faith communities and United Way, completed the *Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness*, which presents a vision and outlines strategies to end homelessness in King County. It includes recommendations to create more housing units, as well as implementing a range of prevention and service-delivery strategies which have been shown to be effective in addressing this problem.¹⁸
- Under the banner of the Ten Year Plan, in 2008, 77 new rental units and 585 units of existing rental housing were made available to homeless individuals and families. Taken together with units in the pipeline, 1,932 new rental units and 1,412 existing rental units were made available to the population since the Ten Year Plan was launched in 2005.¹⁹
- According to King County Community Services Division, 147 shelter beds and 150 transitional units were reported in Spring 2007.²⁰ There have been slight increases since, with 156 shelter beds and 185 transitional units reported in Spring 2009.²¹
- While the Ten Year Plan provides a broad framework to guide county-wide approaches to homelessness, it does not focus on specific sub-regional issues. In 2007, the Eastside Human Services Forum and Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC) created a strategic plan that is specific for East King County. This document is intended to serve as a companion piece to the overall Ten Year Plan, describing needs and solutions to homelessness in East King

County and connecting the Ten Year Plan's vision to the Eastside.

- The East King County Plan calls for significant increases in prevention strategies as well as an additional 820 units of permanent supportive housing for single adults, 930 units for families and 96 units for youth. Within these targets, 45 units are called out as necessary for domestic violence victims (both single and with families) as well as an additional 30 units of interim or transitional housing designed specifically for the safety and security needs of domestic violence victims.²²

Emergency Shelter

- Emergency shelter is defined as temporary shelter from the elements and unsafe streets for homeless individuals and families. There is an extensive network of emergency shelter facilities in Seattle/King County, but the demand exceeds available beds. People are referred through a variety of sites, including the Crisis Clinic and WIN 2-1-1, DSHS offices, police departments and human services agencies. While some emergency shelter for individuals and families exists on the Eastside, beds are in particularly short supply compared to the growing need.
- Hopelink operates emergency and transitional housing in Bellevue, Kenmore and Redmond. In 2008, Hopelink turned away 898 families requests for interim housing. Through April 2009, turn-aways numbered 359 families. If trends continue, this may yield an approximate 20% increase from 2008 to 2009.²³
- Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council operates the Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) shelter program and life coaching for single homeless men. This is the only shelter in East King County for single adult men, offering 30 beds. The shelter rotates each month between different congregations, primarily in Bellevue. CFH also successfully operates 18 units of housing on the Eastside, both at scattered sites and at two facilities.²⁴
- There are two teen shelters on the Eastside, both operated by Friends of Youth. Youth Haven is a shelter in Bellevue for girls 11-17 years old and Joshua House is a shelter in Kenmore for boys age 11-17. In addition, there is a young adult overnight shelter open five nights per week at the Bellevue Family YMCA for youth 18-24 years old called The Landing. These individuals, while often considered too old for traditional youth services and too young for adult shelters, need transitional housing and case management to guide them toward jobs, mental health and/or drug treatment services, and permanent housing.
- Tent City 4 consists of homeless adults who form temporary encampments to live together as a community. Tent City 4 sets up on land owned by faith communities for several months at a time, then moving to another location. Since first arriving on the Eastside in Spring 2004, the camp has maintained a consistent presence on the Eastside, locating in Bellevue, Bothell, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, Woodinville, and unincorporated King County. The resident population of Tent City 4 fluctuates based upon the time of year and the location, however, they have consistently had 40-60 individuals total, with stays as short as a few days to as long as several years.
- In addition, some organizations like the Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Hopelink and Eastside Domestic Violence Program have access to vouchers for hotels and motels for several nights for emergency purposes, but these are limited and dependent on funding.
- The YWCA operates emergency shelters in South King County, targeting residents of that region. However, they have found that people from all parts of the county seek shelters there. For 2008, the YWCA logged 185 "turn-aways" of Bellevue residents at its emergency shelters in South King County, due to a lack of available space. These are individuals as members of families, and

do not include singles without children. Duplications within the figure are possible but are reportedly rare.²⁵

- While East King County has over 30% of the county's overall population, only 8% of the county's emergency shelter beds are located here. Bellevue residents are 6.3% of the countywide population and shelter beds in Bellevue make up 3.5% of the county's total.²⁶

Transitional Housing

- Transitional housing is defined as housing that formerly homeless individuals and families can live in for up to two years while they secure permanent housing. When there are no units of permanent housing available, sometimes people are able to extend their stay in transitional housing. This delay, in turn, affects the availability of beds in shelters if there are no transitional housing units available.
- The homeless housing system in King County is beginning to shift its service strategy away from shelter and transitional housing toward providing more units of permanent housing with supportive services provided. This shift removes the set time limits that a household can stay in a particular unit and allows the household to move to more appropriate housing when needed. Over time, this means that countywide some existing transitional housing units will change to either shorter term interim housing or to permanent housing with supportive services. How this change will affect existing transitional housing stock on the Eastside is still being assessed.²⁷
- There have been significant increases in the number of transitional housing units operating in Bellevue and on the Eastside in the past two years. On the Eastside, there are 193 units of transitional housing offering 589 beds. In Bellevue, there are 38 units with 132 beds. All of the Bellevue units happen to be limited to either families or pregnant single women. Similarly, the vast majority of transitional housing units on the

Eastside are targeted to families. There are no units dedicated to single individuals, with the exception of two units for single women who are domestic violence victims.²⁸

- Demand for homeless housing continues to outpace supply by a wide margin. The East King County Plan to End Homelessness reports a need for 1,845 units of homeless housing (either newly built or obtained from existing rental housing stock). This total considered the homeless population on the Eastside and the current turn-away ratios reported by existing housing programs.²⁹

Shelter for Homeless Veterans

- The King County Veterans' Program serves low-income, at-risk eligible veterans and their dependents. A significant portion of those they serve are homeless, and many are at risk of becoming homeless. The community's understanding of the prevalence of homelessness among veterans has been highly anecdotal. However, the 2009 One Night Count found 414 individuals, including 20 women, currently in homeless housing reporting past military service.³⁰
- Providers working with this population, nationally and locally, are concerned that the returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are at high risk of joining this homeless population. In 2008, the RAND Corporation released a study suggesting that 20% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffered from symptoms of PTSD or major depression, and 19% reported a possible traumatic brain injury during their deployment.³¹ Such mental health issues can have a significant impact on a person's ability to maintain housing and economic self-sufficiency.

Affordable Permanent Housing Prevalence

- Affordable housing is defined as housing which costs residents no more than 30% of their household income. For homeowners, this typically means that no more than 25% of their income is spent on mortgage

payments, leaving 5% for taxes, insurance, and utilities.

- A large number of Bellevue residents continue to pay more than the recommended portion of their income towards housing costs. According to 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) data, 38% of renters and 30% of homeowners in Bellevue paid more than 30% of their income for housing, and 30% of Bellevue renters and 23% of Bellevue homeowners spend 35% or more of their income on housing. These percentages are comparable to those found countywide, indicating that affordability is a regional issue.³²
- Based on 2008 statistics for King County, about three of every four renter households earning below 60% of the median income in King County pay more than 30% of their income for housing. Among all homeowners, over one-third pay more than 30% of their income for housing; over two-thirds of homeowners earning below 60% of the median pay more than 30% of their income for housing.³³

Service Trends

Growth of Affordable Housing Stock

- The City is above its moderate income affordable housing targets (80% of median income) and made substantial progress toward its low-income affordable housing

Target Population	Direct Assistance	Regulatory Incentives	Market	Total
Low-income (50% of median)	1,240 units	-	-	1,240 units
Moderate-income (80% median)	589 units	306 units	830 units	1,725 units
Total Units	1,829 units	306 units	830 units	2,965 units

targets (50% median income), as established in 1994 as part of the King County Comprehensive Planning Policies. Efforts at preserving affordable housing and Section 8 housing continue. Since the Countywide Planning Policies were adopted in 1993,

approximately 2,965 units of affordable housing have been created and/or are in the process of being made available, in or through assistance from Bellevue.³⁴

Housing Choice Voucher Availability

- King County Housing Authority (KCHA) administers the federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program. Low-income individuals who receive vouchers can use these subsidies to find housing in the private market. As of September 2008, there were 782 Bellevue households using Housing Choice Vouchers, a number that has fluctuated between a low of 658 and the current figure since 2003. For the 12 months ending September 30, 2008, this represented payments of approximately \$6.5 million to Bellevue landlords. The Housing Choice Voucher program has for many years dealt with cuts from the federal government. Housing Authorities and advocates are hopeful that the program funding will stabilize and possibly increase in 2010 and future years.³⁵
- The average income of a family receiving a Housing Choice Voucher is \$13,693.³⁶

KCHA Public Housing in North and East King County

- KCHA serves 440 households in 13 family development public housing properties

across North and East King County. About 96% of these units are two-bedroom or higher, and the average income of these

households is \$18,062. About 75% of these households are at or below 30% of area median income (AMI).

- KCHA serves 505 households in eight mixed population development public housing properties across North and East King County. About 99% are one-bedroom and

studio units, and the average income of these households is \$9,670. About 96% of these households are at or below 30% AMI.³⁷

- The Housing Authority also provides 1,239 affordable housing units in Bellevue financed with tax credits and/or tax-exempt bonds. These apartment complexes, which include Somerset Gardens, Woodside East and the Newporter, do not receive operating subsidies from HUD.³⁸

Rental Housing Market

- The annual *Out of Reach Report*, published by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition each December, quantifies the significant disparity between the cost of housing and earnings of average households. A key example finds that there is not one county in the nation where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford a one-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent.
- Washington State, with the highest minimum wage in the country, is no exception. The 2009 minimum wage was \$8.55. However, to afford a two-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of the one's income on housing, a household had to earn \$16.81 per hour in Washington. In the Seattle-Bellevue area, that figure was estimated to be \$18.98.³⁹
- The Eastside continues to have the highest average rents compared to the other subregions in the County and to the County

overall. In April 2009, the average Eastside apartment rent was \$1,259, while the average in King County was \$1,065. Note that this gap has widened overall since 2003.

Increasing Vacancy Rates

- Vacancy rates are often used as an indicator of future rent prices. If vacancy rates are low, rent prices tend to increase due to scarcity of available units; if vacancy rates are high, rent prices decrease as owners attempt to fill unoccupied units. According to the April 2009 Dupre + Scott Apartment Vacancy Report, the vacancy rate for the entire Puget Sound region in early 2009 was 6.6%—down from 7.4% in Fall 2004. This may be attributable to increasing unemployment concurrent with increases in unit supply. In 2008 and 2009, it is expected that over 8,000 units will have been made available.
- The vacancy rates in King County and the Eastside, at 6.7% and 6.8% respectively, show a market that is tracking closely with all of Puget Sound (6.6%). Vacancy rates on the Eastside were on a steady decreasing trend until 2007, when the average vacancy was reported at 3.8%. However, the vacancy rate has increased since.

Increasing Rental Rates in Bellevue

- The table below shows a breakdown of average apartment rental prices in Bellevue

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009
Eastside	1,044	976	984	1,130	1,259
King County	880	857	860	946	1,065
Difference	164	119	124	184	194

Source: Dupre and Scott, the Apartment Vacancy Report, April 2009

in April 2007 and 2009 and compares them to average prices in King County. In Bellevue and King County,

Area	Studio		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom (1 bath)		3 Bedroom	
	April 2007	April 2009	April 2007	April 2009	April 2007	April 2009	April 2007	April 2009
Bellevue - East	722	787	886	987	999	1139	1,162	1562
Bellevue - West	842	994	1,141	1,361	1,191	1366	1,854	2267
Bellevue - Factoria	N/A	N/A	887	979	1,068	996	1,406	1,562
Bellevue - Average	782	891	971	1,109	1,086	1,167	1,474	1,797
King County	742	844	842	961	890	1003	2,140	1,375

vacancy rates are increasing, but so are rents.

- From the perspective of tenants, the rental market is increasingly difficult: rents are expected to continue to rise, though with incentives such as rent reductions or free parking available. In April 2007, rental incentives were offered by only 11% of Eastside apartment complexes. In April 2009, incentives were offered at 61% of properties.⁴⁰

Home Ownership Market

- Median home prices decreased with the economic downturn, when compared to recent years. In June 2008, the median home sale price in the Puget Sound area was \$340,000. In June 2009, that figure was just under \$306,000.⁴¹
- Specifically in King County, the median home price fell from \$481,000 in July 2007 to \$382,500 in January 2009.
- Median selling prices of homes (including single-family homes and condominiums) closing in King County decreased from \$400,000 in June 2008 to \$363,116 in June 2009.
- The median price for all Eastside houses and condos closing in June 2009 was \$476,000—a decrease compared to \$539,000 in June 2008, representing a nearly 12% change in price. The median closing price of single-family homes was \$538,000 and \$260,000 for condos.⁴²
- According to a recent report by the City of Bellevue’s Department of Planning and Community Development, overall, the number of properties at risk of foreclosure and those that have been foreclosed upon increased dramatically in 2008 and the first and second quarters of 2009. From April 2009 through June 2009, 131 properties were issued a notice of trustee sale (NTS), up from 30 during the same period a year before, representing a 337% increase. There were eight notices of trustee sales during this period in 2007. Overall only 0.4% of Bellevue’s total housing stock received a NTS in 2009, putting Bellevue in the lowest

quartile of cities in King County in terms of the rate of NTSs recorded. However, Bellevue had the highest rate of growth in the rate of NTSs recorded during the first two quarters of 2009. Within King County the number of NTSs recorded within the first two quarters of 2009 was two percent higher than the number recorded in all of 2008. In Bellevue, the number was 40% higher. In terms of the total number of NTSs recorded, Bellevue ranked 6th in King County up from 10th in 2006 following unincorporated King County, Seattle, Federal Way, Kent, and Renton. These trends confirm anecdotal information the City has received regarding the increased number of distressed properties within Bellevue.

Legislative and Policy Changes Affecting Basic Needs Issues

- The year 2009 marked the first year since 2004 wherein the City of Bellevue saw an increase in the amount provided to the city through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Factoring inflation, the City of Bellevue in 2009 received less than the amount of CDBG that it received in 1997. The majority of Bellevue CDBG funding is used to build or preserve affordable housing.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, or Recovery Act) of 2009 brought “stimulus” money to the City of Bellevue, through a few avenues, including the CDBG program. Tracked separately as “CDBG-Recovery” or CDBG-R, the funds were used by the City to preserve affordable housing and to make capital improvements to an adult day health center.
- The 2009 Washington State Legislature allocated \$100 million to the Housing Trust Fund, which is far less than what housing advocates have projected as a need (\$200 million). This funding will be used for acquiring, building, and rehabilitating housing for low-income individuals, including farm workers, people with developmental disabilities, homeless families

and victims of domestic violence.

- During the 2009 State Legislative Session, an increased document recording fee will fund other housing and homelessness programs including Independent Youth Housing, the Emergency Shelter Assistance Program, and a 90 day housing voucher program for ex-offenders. This will mean about \$9.63 million/biennium for King County.
- Due to strong advocacy efforts by a number of groups, the Legislature also maintained \$10 million in the state budget for the elimination of co-pays for all school breakfasts and lunches in K-3rd grade, the Meals for Kids breakfast subsidy and funds to provide meals during the summer for low-income kids.

Community Perceptions

- In the 2009 Bellevue phone survey, 34% of respondents rated the issue of *having jobs that do not pay enough for the basics of food, shelter, and clothing* as a major or moderate community problem. This is approximately the same percentage as in the last four phone surveys beginning in 2001. On a similar question regarding problems at the household level, 11.3% of respondents identified *not being able to find work that supports yourself or your family* as a major or moderate problem, similar to 2007. This comes after highs of 15-16% in 2003 and 2005. Women are significantly more likely to report this is a major community problem.
- Other phone survey results confirm that meeting basic needs continues to be a concern for Bellevue residents, not too different from two years ago. For example, in the 2009 phone survey, 17.7% of respondents rated hunger as a major or moderate problem in Bellevue, slightly higher than the 15% reported in the 2005 and 2007 survey results. This was the

"At our community center we are receiving more requests for housing assistance due to job loss. We are also seeing more individuals who are homeless and need resources including showers, change of clothes, etc."
Bellevue Employee Survey

sixth consecutive survey in which lack of affordable housing (as a community problem) received the greatest percentage of major and combined major/moderate ratings. However, this was the first survey that the percentage decreased significantly compared to previous years, from 69% in 2007 to 59% in 2009. The percentage of respondents rating homelessness as a major or moderate problem decreased slightly between 2007 and 2009 (16.5% to 15%).

- In the phone survey at the household level, *not having work that supports yourself and your family* and *not having enough money to pay for housing* remained in the top ten list of problems similar to 2005 and 2007.
- In the 2009 consumer survey, almost half (49%) of respondents rated *not having work that supports yourself or your family* as a moderate or major problem, a large increase compare to 2007 when 35% rated this as such. *Not having money to pay for housing, not being able to pay for food or clothing* and *not being able to pay for utilities* were

all rated as a major/moderate household problem by 33-45% of respondents. All four of these areas registered large increases compared

to the 2007 survey. This is very consistent with the fact that the almost half of those completing the consumer survey earn less than \$10,000/year, and almost 80% speak a language other than English at home.

- In a survey of Bellevue employees, the area of need most frequently identified by Bellevue citizens interacting with City staff was assistance paying for utilities.
- In several of the Community Conversations conducted in 2009, particularly with diverse groups, the need for fresh food rather than only canned or packaged items at food banks was identified.
- During a number of key informant interviews, many comments were made

about the presence of severe economic changes due to the recession on families in the past were doing well. More requests for basic needs expenses, such as rent, utilities and food were all indicators that people were unable to now manage without outside assistance.

Implications for Action

- As noted on the Bellevue Cares webpage, Bellevue, like other communities around the country, is feeling the effects of the national recession. Even as the housing crisis has had its impact in King County, Bellevue and the Eastside continue to offer few opportunities for affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing and increasing energy costs continue to put significant strain on household budgets – with no sign of improvement in the near future. A significant need for housing affordable for moderate-income households (also termed workforce housing) exists across the county and particularly on the Eastside.
- As noted in the Eastside Human Services Forum’s toolkit of replicable ideas for human services providers, businesses, faith communities, and government officials, providers may explore innovations to maximize limited and dwindling resources. Examples include the development of service campuses wherein agencies can share resources, such as the Family Resource Center in Redmond.
- Human service agencies are pressed to the limit in providing not only emergency financial assistance, addressing homelessness, and bolstering food security. Budget crises have forced cuts to mental health, domestic violence, adult day health, and all other human service sectors.
- In addition to seeking a stable source of funding for human service providers, local governments should explore other avenues for promoting food security and rent supports. These may include providing expanded support for neighborhood associations, encouraging time-banking at the

neighborhood level, and promoting informal care networks.

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