

Goal #1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

Why is this Goal Area Important?

Basic needs like food, shelter and clothing are critical for people to thrive and grow, and vital for a healthy community. This is particularly true for children, as studies show a correlation between poor academic performance and a child's diet.¹ Adults, too, tend to perform better in the workplace if they have a better diet.² Many in Bellevue struggle with meeting basic needs.

What's Working?

- Local emergency financial assistance providers, like the Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Solid Ground and Hopelink, reported that they provided services to more than 6,000 people in Bellevue in 2010, largely through one-time rental or mortgage assistance to avoid eviction or foreclosure. They also aided with utility bills, car repairs, prescription drug costs and food vouchers.³
- Established in 2010, the Coalition for Attainable Financial Education is a collaboration of housing/homeless service providers, colleges, and for-profit financial institutions that are coming up with ways to promote financial awareness toward self-sufficiency.⁴
- In 2010, Hopelink's Eastside food banks distributed 3,565,170 pounds of food to 6,672 families.⁵ Emergency Feeding Program distributed over 1,100 emergency food packs to Bellevue residents.⁶ Renewal Food Bank distributed 214,400 pounds of food in Bellevue.⁷
- Between 2005 and 2011, Eastside affordable housing developers and service providers created 99 housing units for families, 25 units for youth, and 179 units for single adults.⁸

Food Security and Hunger Prevalence

- As of 2009, Washington is 17th in food insecurity among the 50 states, with 14% of households "uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food." This value is between Oregon and California, and is just 0.5% above the national average.⁹
- The percentage of students receiving free and reduced-cost lunch can also help measure community food security. According to Bellevue School District, the total percentage of students qualifying for lunch assistance reached 19.2% during the 2004-05 school year. It remained steady through 2006-07 at about 19%. In October 2008, the school district reported this figure to be 17.7%, increasing to 22.8% by October 2011.
- There are 8 schools in the district where at least 30% of their students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches, and 14 schools reported that at least 20% of their students qualified.¹⁰

Service Trends

Food Banks, Food Stamps and Meal Programs

- Renewal Food Bank reports increasing numbers of Bellevue residents accessing services. Since the economic downturn, they see more people age 18-55 seeking food security, as this demographic makes up 65% of their clientele.¹¹
- Between January 2009 and January 2010, food bank participation at Hopelink increased 20% and another 12% between January 2010 and January 2011. During this same period, however, food distribu-

tion increased only 6% total (from January 2009 to January 2011). Hopelink staff interprets this as demand growing much faster than their food supply. Hopelink also saw a 13% decrease in the number of Emergency Food bags distributed. Hopelink staff believe that as clients regard their economic situation as more long-term, they move to enroll in food bank services which they plan to utilize on a regular basis.¹²

- Emergency Feeding Program of Seattle and King County (EFP) provides emergency food bags through distribution partners (faith groups, schools, etc.). EFP bags are not intended as an ongoing source of supplemental nutrition, but rather as an emergency response to hunger crises. EFP saw a 56.5% increase in requests for food assistance from those distribution partners between 2007 and 2009, with 2010 dipping slightly by 6.9%.¹³
- The Salvation Army operates a weeknight meal program in the Crossroads neighborhood. Program staff report that they serve about 60 per night in 2010.¹⁴
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program providing free food vouchers to low-income people. SNAP enrollment in Washington State has increased significantly from 350,373 in 2002 to over 956,000 in 2010.¹⁵
- The number of Bellevue residents participating in SNAP has fluctuated over the years. In 2003, 3,879 Bellevue residents used the program. In 2005, that number rose to 5,117, decreasing to 4,152 in 2007, increasing to 7,860 by June 2010.¹⁶
- In 2010, the Utility Discount Program provided utility discounts and rebates for 1,278 low-income seniors and disabled residents who receive water, sewer and drainage services from the City of Bellevue. In 2010, the Utility Tax Rebate Program provided refunds of utility taxes to 1,176 low-income residents.¹⁸
- Hopelink's Energy Program continues to see an increase in the number of emergency clients who have a 24-hour shut-off notice or are currently disconnected. From the 2008-2009 to the 2009-2010 energy season, there was a 73% increase in emergency clients, and from the 2009-2010 to the 2010-2011 season there was a 24% increase as of Summer 2011. Hopelink continues to see clients accessing Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the first time.¹⁹
- The Housing Stability Program is offered across King County. In 2010, this program served approximately 707 households during the year, including 158 in East King County zip codes and 58 in Bellevue. A total of \$206,588 was provided to Eastside clients. Approximately 31% received move-in assistance and 69% received eviction prevention assistance.²⁰

Emergency Financial Assistance

- Emergency financial assistance continues to be a need for low- to moderate-income Bellevue residents. Several emergency assistance providers exhaust funds before the end of the year, and some providers cap each household's funding in order to stretch resources across more families. This practice can result in households visit-

ing several different providers to assemble the total funds needed to address their emergency need. To address this situation, Eastside emergency financial assistance providers formed the Meeting Needs Together collaborative, which includes the creation of an online database available to clients in need and to help them coordinate services by keeping information about the availability of services as up to date as possible.¹⁷

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 track trends

over time. The 2011 count found a total of 2,442 individuals sleeping unsheltered and outside.

- In 2011, the One Night Count found 146 unsheltered individuals Urban East King County (including portions of Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond). This is comparable to the 141 found in 2010.²¹

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 strategies to address King County homelessness. It includes recommendations to create more housing units, and a range of prevention and service-delivery strategies.²²
- According to the Committee to End Homelessness, 4,513 units for families, single adults, youth, and chronically homeless people are in planning stages or are in active use. This is 48% of the Ten Year Plan goal as of February 2011.²³
- The Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee calls for significant increases in prevention strategies and an additional 636 units of permanent supportive housing for single adults, 831 units for families, and 71 units for youth.²⁴

Emergency Shelter

- Emergency shelter is 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 demand exceeds availability. People are referred through a variety of sites, including the Crisis Clinic, 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. As of spring 2011, there were approximately 151 facility-based beds available on the Eastside. Of these, 19 are in Bellevue. These operate all year with a set capacity.²⁵

- Hopelink operates emergency and transitional housing in Kenmore and Redmond. In 2008, Hopelink turned away 898 families requesting interim housing, and through April 2009, turn-aways numbered 359 families. If trends continue, this may yield an approximate 20% increase from 2008 to 2009.²⁶
- Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council operates the Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) shelter program with life coaching for single homeless men. This is the only Eastside shelter for single adult men, offering 30 beds. The shelter rotates each month between different congregations, primarily in Bellevue. CFH also successfully operates 46 Eastside housing units at scattered sites and at 4 master leased facilities.²⁷
- There are two Eastside teen shelters for runaway and homeless youth and youth in crisis, both operated by Friends of Youth. Youth Haven Bellevue is an all-girls shelter in for girls 11-17 years old; Youth Haven Kenmore is an all-boys shelter for boys age 11-17. In addition, there is an overnight shelter for young adults age 18-24 open seven nights a week called The Landing. Five nights a week the Landing opens at the Bellevue YMCA, on weekends it operates at local faith communities. The young people who access the Landing are too old for traditional youth services, yet too young for adult shelters. They can access mental health counseling, employment support, public health services, safe shelter and food. Friends of Youth also provides case management to assist youth in securing safe and stable housing, employment and counseling.²⁸
- 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 before 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 consistently have 60-70 individuals.²⁹

- In 2008, the City of Bellevue initiated the Severe Weather Shelter (SWS). During the first activation period (12/08 – 3/09), SWS opened for 21 nights at Crossroads Community Center (CCC), averaging 12 clients per night, with fewer than 200 bed-nights (client stays) recorded. During the second period (10/09 – 3/10), SWS opened for 18 nights, averaged 18 clients per night, and recorded 316 bed-nights. During the third activation period (11/10 – 2/11), the Bellevue Severe Weather Shelter became the Eastside Winter Shelter (EWS) and moved mid-season from CCC to the Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center (ORS). Through this third period, SWS/EWS opened for 68 nights and averaged 39 clients per night, recording 2,670 bed-nights. The 226 unduplicated clients constituted a 283% increase over the preceding season. About 34% of clients were from Bellevue, 24% from Issaquah, Kirkland, and Redmond, and 17% from Seattle. The EWS is operated by Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council and is funded through a variety of public and private funding sources.³⁰
- The Committee to End Homelessness continues to advocate for a move away from shelter and transitional housing, in favor of “Housing First” and rapid re-housing models that quickly move clients from homelessness into housing with supportive services.³¹

Transitional Housing

- Transitional housing is housing where formerly homeless individuals and families can live for up to two years while they secure permanent housing. When there are no available units of permanent housing available, sometimes people can extend their transitional housing stay. This delay, in turn, affects the availability of beds in shelters if there are no transitional housing units available.
- The King County homeless housing system is shifting its service strategy away from shelter and transitional housing toward providing more units of permanent housing with supportive services. This shift removes household time limits and allows the household to move to more appropriate housing when needed.³²
- On the Eastside, there are 200 units of transitional housing offering 585 beds. In Bellevue, there are 43 units with 115 beds. All Bellevue units are limited to either families or pregnant single women. Similarly, the majority of transitional housing units on the Eastside are targeted towards families.³³
- According to the Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC), “Before 2008, there was no shelter for women on the Eastside, meaning a single female would have to sleep on the streets if she was homeless or escaping abuse.” The Sophia Way responded to this need by opening a shelter program which served 172 women from 2009 to 2010. By the end of 2010, the program placed 48 women in housing.³⁴

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 or at risk of becoming so. The 2011 One Night Count found approximately 508 individuals, currently in homeless housing reporting past military service.³⁵

- Providers working with this population, nationally and locally, are concerned that returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are at high risk of joining this homeless population. The RAND Corporation reports that 19% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms or major depression, and 20% reported a possible traumatic brain injury during their deployment. Such mental health issues can have a significant impact on a person’s ability to maintain housing.³⁶

Affordable Permanent Housing Prevalence

- Housing is considered “affordable” if it 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.³⁷
- About 39% of renters and 31.3% of homeowners in Bellevue paid more than 30% of their household income for housing.³⁸
- About 71% of renter households earning below 60% of the median income in King County pay more than 30% of their income for housing. About 76% of homeowners earning below 60% of the median pay more than 30% of their income for housing.³⁹

Service Trends

Growth of Affordable Housing Stock

- The City of Bellevue reports that 2009 production of low- and moderate-income housing units was low compared to its targets. “In 2009, only 9 low-income units (publicly subsidized) and 3 moderate income units (publicly subsidized), well below the target of 110 low and 78 moderate income units per year.” This is attributable to a market slowdown in housing

production, high housing costs presenting a challenge for non-profit housing developers, and for-profit developers not taking advantage of the City’s voluntary incentive program for low- and moderate-income housing unit production.⁴⁰

- Efforts to preserve affordable housing and Section 8 housing continue. Since adoption of the Countywide Planning Policies in 1993, developers have opened or planned approximately 3,105 units of affordable housing, with assistance from the City of Bellevue (see chart below).⁴¹

Housing Choice Voucher Availability

- King County Housing Authority (KCHA) administers the federal Section 8 Housing

Target Population	Direct Assistance	Regulatory Incentives	Market	Total
Low-income (50% of median)	1,250 units			1,250 units
Moderate-income (80% median)	621 units	309 units	925 units	1,855 units
Total Units	1,871 units	309 units	925 units	3,105 units

Choice Voucher rental assistance program. Housing Choice vouchers are provided to low-income families, and the family is free to locate housing in the private rental market as the federal government subsidizes their rent. For the year ending September 30, 2010, 963 households in Bellevue had Section 8 Housing Choice voucher support. In this period, the annual Section 8 payments to landlords within Bellevue amounted to approximately \$9.89 million.⁴²

KCHA Public Housing in Bellevue

- King County Housing Authority administers 339 units of subsidized family housing for very low-income households in Bellevue. Eastside Terrace (50 units), College Place (51 units) and the 8 single-family homes constitute units that are operated under the Public Housing program. In addition, Preservation Program apartment complexes – which offer qualified residents project-based Section 8 housing assistance – are Spiritwood Manor (129

units), Newport Apartments (23 units) and Hidden Village (78 units). Beyond the Preservation Program, project-based Section 8 housing in Bellevue provides an additional 141 units of permanent housing and 10 units of family transitional housing.

- The Housing Authority also provides more than 1,300 affordable housing units in Bellevue financed with tax credits and/or tax-exempt bonds. These housing units do not receive operating subsidies from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.⁴³

Rental Housing Market

- The Washington State minimum wage is \$8.67/hour in 2011. Statewide, to afford a two-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of their income on housing, a household had to earn \$19.10 on average. In the Seattle-Bellevue area, that estimated figure is \$22.62.⁴⁴
- The Eastside continues to have the highest average rents compared to other parts of the county. In March 2011, the average Eastside apartment rent was \$1,222, while the King County average was \$1,049.

2011, the vacancy rate for the entire Puget Sound region was 4.6%—down from 6.6% in early 2009. The vacancy rates in King County and the Eastside (4.3% and 4.2%, respectively) show a market that is tracking closely with all of Puget Sound.

Increasing Rental Rates in Bellevue

- The table below shows a breakdown of apartment rents in Bellevue in April 2009 and March 2011 and compares them to the entire county. In Bellevue and King County, vacancy rates decreased between 2009 and 2011, as rent largely increased.
- 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 2009, 61% of properties offered incentives, compared to 31% in March 2011.⁴⁵

Home Ownership Market

- Median selling prices of homes (including single-family homes and condominiums) closing in King County fell from \$363,116 in June 2009 to \$316,750 in May 2011, representing a 13% decrease.

Rents in Bellevue (\$)								
Area	Studio		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom (1 bath)		3 Bedroom	
	Apr. 2009	Mar. 2011	Apr. 2009	Mar. 2011	Apr. 2009	Mar. 2011	Apr. 2009	Mar. 2011
Bellevue - East	741	746	906	917	1,093	1,074	1,444	1,454
Bellevue - West	926	950	1,266	1,371	1,528	1,509	2,076	2,663
Bellevue - Factoria	N/A	N/A	887	930	1,068	1,150	1,406	1,485
King County	844	825	961	950	1,003	977	1,375	1,343

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. In early

- The median price for all Eastside houses and condos closing in November 2011 was \$412,000—a 13% decrease compared to \$476,000 in June 2009.⁴⁶

Legislative and Policy Changes Affecting Basic Needs Issues

- In 2011, Congress cut the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program by 16%, and this affected CDBG funding in Bellevue.⁴⁷ The

Average Rents in King County and the Eastside (\$), 2001 - 2011					
	3/07	3/08	3/09	3/10	3/11
Eastside	1,130	1,221	1,259	1,165	1,222
King County	946	1,026	1,065	1,017	1,049
Difference	184	195	194	148	173

majority of Bellevue CDBG funding is used to build or preserve affordable housing. In 2012, most municipalities expect further cuts to CDBG.⁴⁸

- The 2011 Washington State Legislature allocated \$50 million for the Housing Trust Fund in the 2011-2013 Biennium.⁴⁹ 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 survivors of domestic violence.

Community Perceptions

- In the 2011 Bellevue phone/online survey, 36% 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 phone surveys between in 2001 and 2009.

"I am over 50 years old and always worked as an accountant. I cannot find work because younger people are paid less so they get the jobs."
Sophia Way Participant, Community Conversation

- In the 2011 phone/online survey, over half (53%) of respondents rated not having work that supports yourself or your family as a moderate or major problem, an increase compared to 2009 when 49% 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 rated as a major/moderate household problem by 41% and 29% of respondents, respectively.
- In the phone/online 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 2011 survey, 22% of respondents rated hunger as a major or moderate problem in Bellevue, slightly higher than the 17.7% reported in the 2009 survey results, and the 15% reported in 2005 and 2007.

- This was the seventh consecutive phone survey in which lack of affordable housing (as a community problem) received the greatest percentage of major and combined major/moderate ratings, at 61%, comparable to 59% reported in 2009. The percentage of respondents rating homelessness as a major or moderate problem changed from 15% in 2009 to 22% in 2011.

"The wait list for housing is a challenge. They don't have a place to stay while they are waiting for housing."
Healthy Start Staff, Community Conversation

- In almost 70% of the 22 Community Conversations conducted (15), participants mentioned their struggles to provide the basics of food, shelter, and utilities for their families. This included people from a wide range of age groups, as well as economic status. For example, older adults as well as teen parents mentioned the need for subsidized housing; recent immigrants as well as people unemployed for the first time in their work lives mentioned the importance of using food banks for their families. Many of these participants mentioned the economic downturn as a major factor for needing help with basic needs.

Implications for Action

- While governments, foundations, and service providers accept that Housing First and rapid re-housing are effective for segments of the homeless population, service providers attending the Committee to End Homelessness charrette process (April 2011) noted that across the county there are not enough available housing units in the service system to shelter the thousands of unsheltered homeless. This is evidenced in the volume of individuals seen at the Eastside Winter Shelter and the 226 individuals who sought a roof overhead on the Eastside from November 2010 to March 2011. This reinforces the ongoing need for interim housing and

shelter coupled with client engagement, until such a time as the homeless housing system has sufficient unit production and maintenance to meet the existing need.

- 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.
- Single family homes in Bellevue have in most cases become out of reach for households earning the median wage. Condominiums are still affordable in some areas of Bellevue, but are also on a trend of becoming out of reach. Little relief is found in the rental market.
- There is a significant need for housing affordable for moderate-income households (also termed workforce housing) on the Eastside.
- Those struggling with hunger in Bellevue would benefit from access to affordable, nutritional food (as opposed to affordable, unhealthy food). By extension, families, schools, and businesses would benefit from a workforce whose healthier diet leads to better academic and workplace productivity.

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