

Jobs and Housing



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COVID-19's impact on the regional economy became a personal tragedy for many County residents who experienced unemployment and housing instability. King County focuses on lifting up those individuals who have felt the brunt of the pandemic through homelessness, joblessness, and economic insecurity. The Jobs and Housing program is designed to stabilize people's lives by providing a steady place to live, an interim job, and access to support services and career navigation for up to one year with the ultimate goal of transitioning each person to permanent housing and a permanent job. The aim of the program is to help people exit the homelessness system, particularly those communities who have been disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

Investment Areas

- Up to 400 individuals experiencing homelessness will be connected to County-supported jobs, housing support, and career services. All will receive case management and career navigation services.
- Currently, there are 54 active participants who have been hired for temporary jobs for up to one year.
- As of June 2022, 21 participants are in permanent housing through a mix of Rapid Re-Housing or other housing support.
- Career counseling and support is offered to all participants, improving their interview, resume, and presentation skills, as well as developing short- and long-term employment plans.

Employment

The program is designed to provide 400 unemployed or underemployed workers that are experiencing homelessness with County or County-supported jobs, job training, subsidized employment, and employment supports or incentives (housing and career services). The County either creates or contracts positions for beneficiaries with subsidized employment for up to one year. This program is expected to extend through 2024. The average pay is between \$20-25 per hour, and many jobs come with health insurance and other benefits. Jobs may be with King County or other local organizations. Participants will also receive employment supports, including but not limited to ORCA transportation passes, work attire, and employment-related equipment.

As of June 2022, 54 active participants have been connected with subsidized King County jobs in Parks, Human Resources, Regional Animal Services Regional (RASKC), Elections, and Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD)/Dirt Corps and contracted positions with other agencies. The WA Department of Ecology and Department of Local Services (DLS) are in the process of candidate searches and interviewing. New job possibilities are always being sought.

Performance is assessed in terms of the numbers of candidates involved in various stages of the hiring and retention process. To date, the majority of program participants have been employed with Parks performing maintenance and beautification projects over the duration of the program. There are an additional 22 positions that are currently being recruited for.

Four individuals have now successfully transitioned from the program, acquiring a permanent job and housing. Challenged in recruiting and retention in County positions, the Job and Housing team is exploring how individuals can be better prepared to connect and maintain successful employment. For example, the program eligibility form is being refined to focus recruitment for the skills being sought by host agencies. In addition, targeted recruitment is being conducted from social service agencies based on job requirements. Over 300 individuals have expressed an interest in the program; the team is continually reaching out to them, and a new job board of open training and employment opportunities is in the works.



Figure 1: Photo of King County Parks Beautification Crew Members, Parks Director Warren Jimenez, and Executive Dow Constantine at 2021 Revive and Thrive Jobs and Housing Event.

On-the-ground and classroom job training on related topics is provided. For example, the Jobs and Housing participants with Dirt Corps will be provided with paid restoration training, professional skills development, and equity and social justice training. Other training opportunities may include natural area management, planting, riparian restoration, invasive species management, stormwater management, and site maintenance.

The Jobs and Housing program is off to a great start, building its capacity to enroll more workers and expand the pool of jobs, aligning with partners to provide housing and support, and developing its

performance and evaluation strength. In addition, valuable and essential work is contributing to the health and vibrancy of the County's resources, particularly in supporting needed restoration to parks, facilities, and roadways. This is work that would not have been able to be completed without the Jobs and Housing Program—an extra benefit to King County.

Housing Support & Rapid Re-Housing

All Jobs and Housing program participants receive housing support, and eligible participants are referred to Rapid Re-Housing (RRH). Those who experience homelessness struggle with both finding and sustaining housing. King County uses multiple approaches to house the homeless, and more information can be found in the Homelessness Response section. Housing assistance through the Jobs and Housing Program provides additional capacity to address our homelessness crisis, particularly for those who are in emergency shelters and those who require employment to sustain their Rapid Re-Housing placements.

This project provides funding to contract Rapid Re-Housing Partners (e.g., Wellspring Family Services, Catholic Community Services, and Neighborhood House) to provide housing navigation support and housing subsidies for up to 400 individuals based on current RRH guidelines. Contracted agencies must demonstrate their ability to provide housing support equitably and to a diversity of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Using the Rapid Re-Housing model, housing interventions are designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing. Short-term rental assistance and voluntary supportive services are provided. Those typically eligible for Rapid Re-Housing must be experiencing literal homelessness, such as those living in emergency shelters, unhoused (living in their car or other places), and individuals leaving the hospital or prisons without a place to go. Data regarding the RRH model demonstrates that it is an effective strategy for transitioning individuals out of homelessness. RRH data indicates a successfully large move-in rate and high level of permanent housing.

How are rapid re-housing programs performing overall?

4/1/2021 to 3/31/2022

ALL POPULATIONS



Figure 2: Rapid Re-Housing has been very successful in permanently housing households with low returns to homelessness.

Figure from *The King County Regional Homelessness Authority's Rapid Re-Housing [Data Dashboard](#)*.

Not every participant can be referred to Rapid Re-Housing based on their living situation, but in that case those program recipients still receive other support to find permanent housing. Neighborhood House will provide housing services for those not eligible for Rapid Re-Housing. A number of contractors will also provide their own housing support. Community partners include African Community Housing & Development (ACHD), InterCultural Children & Family Services (ICCFs), Juma

Ventures, Orion, Seattle Humane, Weld Seattle Housing, Seattle Jobs Initiative, Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), WA Department of Ecology, Uplift Northwest, and TRAC Associates. To date, 7 participants have been housed with Weld Seattle and TRAC, while 23 have been referred and enrolled in Rapid Re-Housing services.

Currently, 28 Jobs and Housing beneficiaries have been eligible and referred for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), and 21 are in permanent housing through RRH, contracted partners, or other support to find permanent housing.

Career Services

All participants receive career services, including connection to a Career Navigator and help in obtaining their next unsubsidized permanent job. Basic career services include job readiness workshops, skills assessment, information on labor market, professional development skills training, or job search strategies. Individualized career services can include development of an employment plan, individual career planning, workshops on resumes, interviewing, or referral to education/training programs. In addition, some career attainment funding is available to support services to cover costs that will remove barriers to employment (e.g., driver's license, childcare, work related clothes or tools, training related costs, certifications).

Beyond career navigation and counseling, the Jobs and Housing program provide support that includes connection to public benefits, ORCA transportation passes, equipment or attire required for work, training and education that takes place pre-employment, on-the-job, or post-program to support permanent employment, and any other support that removes barriers to employment.

King County's Jobs and Housing Program connects people experiencing homelessness to jobs and housing support, starting with crews that are restoring and enhancing regional parks and trails.

CASE STUDY

Jobs and Housing Program

[In September 2021](#), King County Executive Dow Constantine met with one of the new crews restoring and enhancing regional parks and trails, an early success of the Jobs and Housing Program he included in the [pandemic recovery package](#) announced earlier that year. Executive Constantine said, "When you take the time to talk to our unhoused neighbors, what you consistently hear is that they don't want handouts. They want opportunities. **And that's what this program offers. An opportunity for a good paying job. An opportunity to get a roof over your head. An opportunity to work with professionals to chart a path forward in your life towards that self-sufficiency, that dignity.** And it's even better when that job contributes to the community where you live."

King County's Jobs and Housing Program hosted focused recruitment events at emergency shelters to offer people experiencing homelessness the opportunity to join the King County Parks Beautification Crews, earning salaries that can help them transition to permanent housing. The new program applies the County's [Rapid Re-Housing](#) model and other career services to connect participants with housing and employment supports.



A Jobs and Housing participant shared that, **"This program means a lot to me mainly because it gives me an opportunity to get motivation back on my side of things and move forward with my life and keep going. But at the same time, it gives me an opportunity also to learn a new trade, to learn something new, and to help build and beautify the city itself in the county."**

Successful candidates for the program will earn between \$20 and \$25 per hour for temporary positions and will receive housing support. Program participants will also receive career support aimed at helping them transition to permanent jobs and permanent housing. The program helps people who have gaps in their employment history and potentially offers them professional references for future job searches.

“Programs like this give us the opportunity to grow, knowing that hope is there instead of despair, knowing that there is someone behind us,” remarked another Jobs and Housing participant with the King County Parks Beautification Crew.

Beyond connecting individuals to jobs and permanent housing, this program provides beneficiaries the opportunity to make our County a better place through productive and needed community work. In doing this good work, “this [program] will also instill a sense of belonging, something to give these program participants more acknowledgment in the community that they are from,” said Maju Qureshi, Economic Stability Director at the non-profit Multi-Service Center.

The beautification crews are starting at five King County parks where they will perform a variety of tasks, such as landscaping, athletic field maintenance, trail building and maintenance, construction and demolition, invasive weed removal, restoration, and planting. The first regional parks where the crews operate are Five Mile Lake Park in South King County, White Center Heights Park, Marymoor Park in Redmond, Tolt-MacDonald Park and Campground in Carnation, Three Forks Natural Area along the Snoqualmie River in East King County, and Ravensdale Park near Maple Valley.



The program will increase King County Parks’ seasonal crews by 36 people who are currently experiencing homelessness. The additional workforce is particularly helpful now that more people than ever are enjoying the regional parks and trails during the pandemic. “The need to clean and restore these amenities has never been greater. The work our new crews will do will not just improve the esthetics of our parks and open space, but they’ll also improve those areas ecological functions to help ensure a clean water and healthy habitat,” said Warren Jimenez, King County Parks Director.

King County Parks has so far conducted five recruitment events at emergency shelters in Seattle, South King County, and East King County. Once background checks and physicals are complete, Parks provides crew members with on-the-job training while other partner organizations assist with securing housing

and career counseling. King County Metro is helping crew members arrive at worksites with its ORCA Business Passport program, which connects workers through its regional transit network (incl. Vanpool). Homelessness is happening all across our region, “but the answer to that is opportunity. The answer to that is housing. And I want to emphasize again that this program provides the opportunity to earn a living, doing good, productive, needed work, and provides the opportunity to right away get into solid housing. So that’s what this program is about. For the individuals participating and for us collectively. And I just want to thank the people for being so supportive of it. I thank our members of Congress for helping fund this and make it possible and particularly help the participants who are going to be joining together to make our region a better place,” said Executive Constantine.

Executive Constantine included funding for the Jobs and Housing Program in the combined \$600 million COVID-19 supplemental budget he proposed in March 2021. The County Council approved \$38 million for the program in May 2021 as part of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. **By December 2024, it is expected that a total of 400 individuals experiencing homelessness will be supported with these services.**

Other potential positions created by the Jobs and Housing Program may include:

- Caring for animals and engaging with customers at Regional Animal Services of King County
- Restoring sensitive ecological areas with the Water and Lands Division
- Validating voter records with King County Elections
- Performing litter removal in unincorporated King County with the Department of Local Services



“Our new Jobs and Housing Program is one example of how we are sparking an equitable recovery throughout King County,” said Executive Constantine. “By connecting our unhoused neighbors with good-paying jobs and case managers who can help them transition to permanent housing, we are helping more people and families thrive.”

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Jobs and Housing Program

The Jobs and Housing Program provides funding for a new County program promoting economic recovery by connecting individuals experiencing homelessness with County or County-supported jobs, housing support, and career services. Additionally, the program supports employment and training programs provided by agencies to individuals experiencing homelessness so they can move toward economic and housing stability. Agencies were selected following two procurement rounds and after outreach to community partners notifying them of this funding opportunity. A key consideration in selecting agency partners was the equitable distribution of funds to communities disproportionately impacted by homelessness was assessed in proposal review and recommendations.

How much?

The Program is **intended to support 400 individuals experiencing homelessness** with these services by creating county or county-contracted positions for program beneficiaries, contracting with community partners to provide job training and jobs for program beneficiaries. The program provides subsidized employment for up to one year for individuals experiencing homelessness.

There are **currently 54 active participants**, although a total of 70 participants have started the program. Some participants have left the position due to transitioning to permanent employment and housing, voluntary exits from the program, or were employment separations

Subsidized King County jobs are provided to 31 current participants in Parks, Human Resources, Regional Animal Services Regional (RASKC), Elections, and Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD)/Dirt Corps. 23 participants are currently employed by contracted partners Weld and TRAC. Additional agencies, including the WA Department of Ecology and Department of Local Services (DLS), are in the process of candidate searches and interviewing.

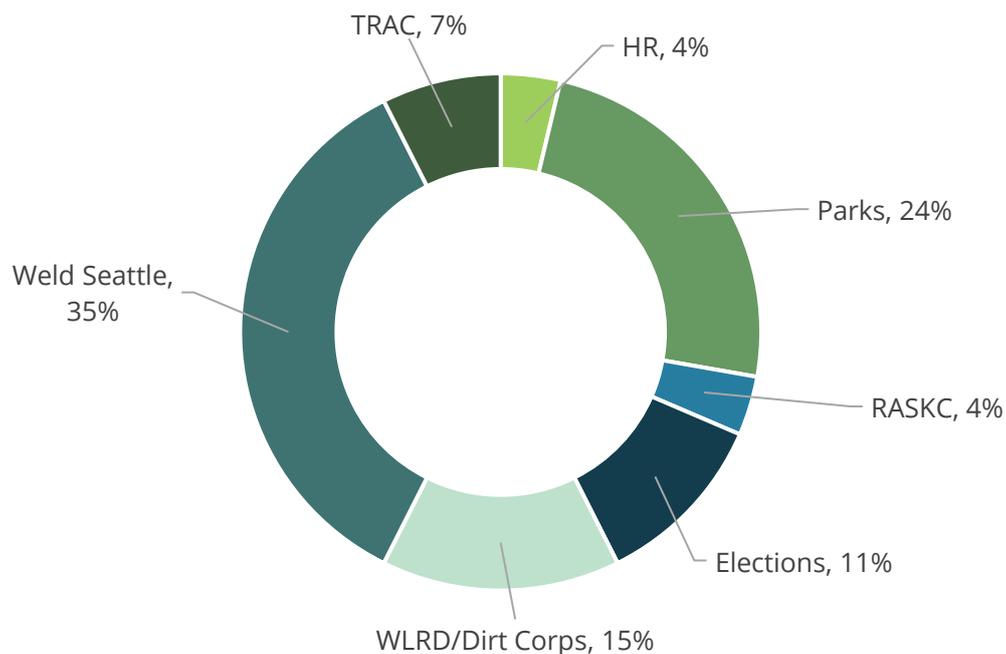


Figure 3: Weld Seattle and King County Parks currently employ the highest number of program participants.

How equitably did we provide service?

Communities disproportionately impacted by homelessness are prioritized. Steps to equitable awareness include outreach and guidance to targeted homeless service providers and community partners, and discussion with all partners about equity goals. Current demographic data is still being collected for the 23 participants with contracted agencies and the four new King County participants for which race/ethnicity data has yet to be collected. 47 individuals have enrolled in the program with King County employment (70 including contracted partners):

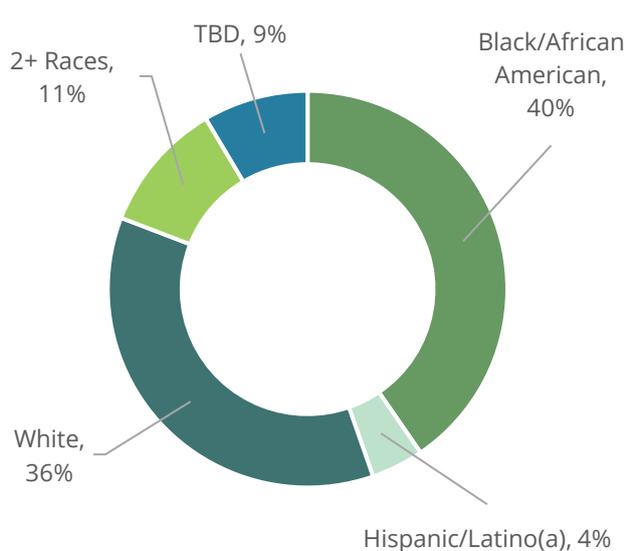


Figure 4: Diverse race/ethnicity distribution in Jobs and Housing participants.

King County enrolled participants include 40% Black/African American, 36% White, 11% multiracial, and 4% Hispanic/Latino(a). Data for 4 new King County participants have yet to be determined.

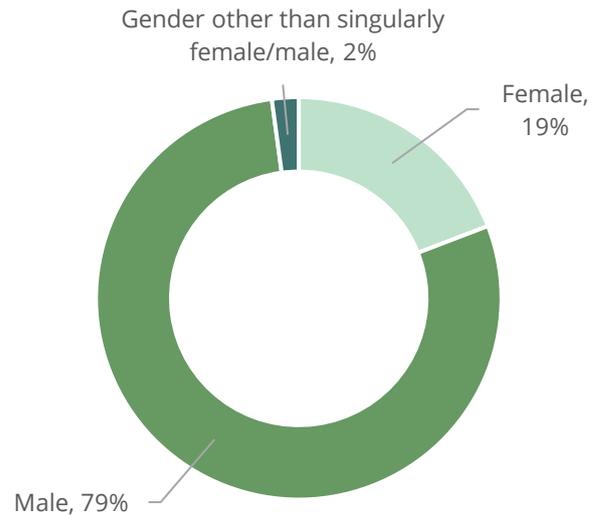


Figure 5: Majority male gender identification in Jobs and Housing participants.

79% of Jobs and Housing participants with King County jobs identify as male, 19% identify as female, and 2% identify as nonbinary.

54 participants are actively enrolled. The vast majority of participants identify as male. Of those no longer in the program, four found permanent employment and permanent housing. Others left for various reasons including: unvaccinated, moved, health, performance, etc.

Equitable distribution of funds to communities disproportionately impacted by homelessness has been a visible goal. The [2020 Point-in-Time Count](#) for Seattle/King County reported Native American/Alaska Native people made up one percent of the population in Seattle/King County, but 15 percent of the respondents experienced homelessness. Black/African Americans are 7 percent of the Seattle/King County population, but 25 percent of the respondents. Latinx persons are 10 percent of the Seattle/King County population, but 15 percent of the survey respondents.

All participants are eligible for housing support. Currently, 28 participants have been eligible and referred for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and 23 have been enrolled in other housing support by contracted partners Weld Seattle and TRAC. Weld Seattle is set to provide housing enrollment and support to 100 individuals, five of which are housed as of June 2022, with 19 additionally enrolled. TRAC will provide direct housing to 25 participants in total, two of which are already permanently housed.

As of June 2022, **21 participants are in permanent housing** through RRH, contracted providers, and other support to find permanent housing. Rapid Re-Housing partner Catholic Community Services has provided ~57% of permanent housing provided to date. Rapid Re-Housing partner Neighborhood House has also provided housing services to non-RRH-eligible participants, two of which have been permanently housed.

Is anyone better off?

To date, **4 individuals have successfully left the program**, having found permanent housing and permanent employment. For the most part, beneficiaries are still working in the program. The program is designed to provide job and housing support for one year, and the first cohort of program participants employment will end in December 2022. The wait time to transition participants to permanent housing has been challenging. As a result, the housing support period lags the employment period for most participants by several months. The program will be able to provide more robust outcome reporting next year, as more participants complete the program.

Intended outcome goals include, but are not limited to:

- **75%** of participants employed 6 months after program completion,
- **\$10k/person** quarterly earnings, and
- **<20%** return to homelessness 6 months after program completion.

This program has specific goals, including that **80%** of participants complete job assignments and that **80%** of participants move into permanent housing while in the program. The Program plans to utilize a randomized control trial and a qualitative evaluation of the program to determine impact on permanent housing and employment outcomes, as well as to improve program delivery and approach. The ultimate goal is for individuals to be on an economic footing that enables them to exit the homelessness system.

King County would not have been able to complete the valuable work needed without the Jobs and Housing Program. The community has benefited directly, by the enhancement of parks, the clean-up of trails, and the myriad additional jobs performed by the participants for the public good. The Jobs and Housing Program has inspired and encouraged individuals ready to work, to provide support for their own community.