

# Protect Services That Prevent and End Homelessness



## ELIMINATE THE SUNSET ON DOCUMENT RECORDING FEES, INCREASE THE FEE, AND ELIMINATE THE 45% MANDATE

Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home, but during the 2016 point in time count 20,844 people were found experiencing homelessness. While that number has increased statewide over the last two years, fewer people are actually experiencing homelessness than otherwise would, thanks to a critical state resource - the Document Recording Fees.

A modest fee paid to file real estate related documents provides Washington's most important source of funding to combat homelessness. The fees fund domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, outreach services, short- and long-term rental assistance, move-in assistance, permanent supportive housing services, and more.

The fees are paid on real estate transactions such as home purchases. The amount has been adjusted over time, but hasn't kept pace with rising rents and inflation. Because of the

sunset in current law, in 2019 more than 60% of Washington's homelessness funding will vanish.

The dramatic cliff in funding for community resources will increase homelessness for people with mental and physical disabilities, veterans, families, homeless youth and young adults, and more.

Additionally, 45% of fees collected are mandated to be used for vouchers in the for-profit market. But discrimination by landlords who refuse to accept vouchers greatly limits the opportunity for people to use their vouchers, and money meant to end homelessness is not as effective as it could be.

The state legislature should eliminate the sunset on these fees, increase the fee to keep pace with rising rents, and eliminate the 45% mandate so that all homelessness dollars can be used in the most efficient way possible and be tailored to local needs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Document Recording Fees are Washington's most important resource for combatting homelessness
- Services funded with these fees are working. Predictions based on rent, unemployment, and population could have caused the January 2016 Point in Time count to be almost 50% higher than it was
- A \$50 increase, if coupled with new Housing Trust Fund investments, would enable Washington to end family homelessness, reduce chronic homelessness by 50%, and ensure that no youth exits a public institution into homelessness
- If the fees sunset, more than 34,000 additional people are likely to experience homelessness in the first two years
- There is a logical connection between real estate activity, housing prices, and rent levels. For every \$100 increase in rent, homelessness increases by between 15 and 39%. A modest fee on the filing of real estate related documents helps to off-set that impact

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Homelessness has decreased since 2005, when the state first enacted these fees.

