

Building the movement to ensure that everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home.

Secure and Increase Funding to Prevent and End Homelessness

Rising housing costs are driving increases in homelessness all along the west coast. Our investments are not keeping up. Washington must meet this growing need by passing HB 1570.

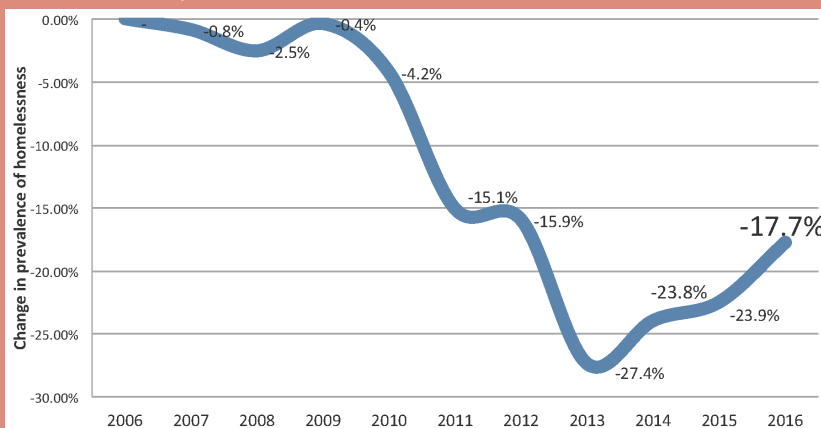
A modest fee paid to file real estate related documents provides Washington's most important source of funding to combat homelessness. The fee funds domestic violence shelters, youth and young adult services, outreach services, rental assistance, permanent supportive housing services, and more.

The real estate market has a direct impact on housing affordability and homelessness. The current surcharge hasn't kept pace with the dramatic rise in rents across the state, and increasing the fee would go a long way toward preventing and ending homelessness. Additionally, current state law expires the surcharge regardless of how many people are suffering without a home.

When the fee expires, the sudden slashing of 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 only. But discrimination by landlords who refuse to accept vouchers greatly limits the opportunity for people to use them, and money meant to end homelessness is not as effective as it could be.

The state legislature should update the law so that the fee doesn't expire, increase the fee to keep pace with rising rents, and ensure that 100% of these homelessness dollars can be used in the most efficient way possible and be tailored to local needs.

Our State's investments work. Homelessness has decreased since 2005, when the state first enacted these fees.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Document Recording Fees are Washington's most important resource for combatting homelessness
- A \$50 fee 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
- With a \$50 increase, the monthly cost of the fee over the life of a 30-year mortgage is about 27 cents per month. This very modest surcharge has tremendous impact for people who are able to move out of homelessness and into safety and security
- If the fee expires, more than 37,000 people could experience homelessness in the first two years
- For every \$100 increase in rent, homelessness increases by at least 6% in cities and by at least 39% in suburban areas. Homelessness is directly linked to housing costs, but the surcharge on real estate related documents can help to off-set this relationship

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