

Cowlitz County's Ten Year Plan To End Homelessness

Lower Columbia College

November 2011



An Operational Definition of Homelessness

- ❑ Lives on the streets, abandoned building, vehicle or other unstable or non-permanent situation
- ❑ Is a resident of an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- ❑ Has no permanent place to return to after hospitalization or incarceration
- ❑ Is doubled-up temporarily with another family

Who Are “The Homeless”?



Impact of the Great Recession

- Total number of homeless persons ↑ 32%
- People in homeless families ↑ 46%
- Singles/couples without children ↑ 15%
- Sources of Income:
 - More people had public benefits as source of income
 - Fewer people have part time work
 - Friends/family can't help out as much
 - Longer lengths of homeless situation

The Great Recession & Causes of Homelessness in Cowlitz County

- Economic situation – 62%
 - Lost job/low paying job/working poor
 - Illness
 - Family break up
- Special need/disability – 16%
 - Mental illness
 - Chronic substance abuse
 - Co-occurring disorder
- Domestic Violence – 11%
- Discharged from a system of care – 11%
 - Jail or Prison
 - Hospital
 - Foster Care

2011 Point In Time Count

Part 1: Homeless Population	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Temporarily Living with Family or Friends*
	Emergency	Transitional		
Number of Families with Children (Family Households):	18	24	3	70
Number of Households <u>without</u> Children:	54	9	39	33
Number of Households <u>without</u> Adults (nobody over 17 years old):	0	0	0	6
A. Number of Persons in Families with Children:	55	75	9	193
B. Number of Single Individuals and Persons in Households <u>without</u> Children:	57	13	41	40
C. Number of Persons in Households <u>without</u> Adults (nobody over 17 years old):	0	0	0	6
(Add Lines A & B & C) Total Persons:	112	88	50	239
Part 2: Homeless Subpopulations	Sheltered		Unsheltered*	Temporarily Living with Family or Friends*
	Emergency	Transitional		
a. Chronically Homeless Individuals	17	NA	23	NA
b. Chronically Homeless Families	2	NA	0	NA
c. Persons in Chronically Homeless Families	5	NA	0	NA
d. Mentally Disabled	17	6	19	9
e. Persons with alcohol and/or other drug problems	14	1	17	3
f. Veterans	8	1	8	5
g. Persons with HIV/AIDS	0	3	4	0
h. Victims of Domestic Violence	50	5	5	10
i. Unaccompanied Youth (Under 18)	0	0	0	6
j. Children (Under 18) in Families	35	43	6	110
k. Physically Disabled	11	7	10	8
l. Seasonal Agricultural Workers	0	0	0	2
m. Persons with both substance use and mental health problems	5	0	10	3
n. Senior citizens (aged 65 or older)	2	0	0	2

Who Are Our Homeless?

	Number	Percent
□ Number of Homeless Families	45	31%
□ Number of Adult Households	102	69%
■ 1/3 are families; 2/3 are adults		
□ Persons In Homeless Families	139	56%
□ Non-Family Homeless Persons	111	44%
■ Over half are in families; almost half are childless adults		



Causes of Homelessness

- ❑ Lack of affordable housing
- ❑ Low paying jobs
- ❑ Substance abuse and lack of needed services
- ❑ Mental illness and lack of needed services
- ❑ Domestic violence
- ❑ Unemployment
- ❑ Poverty
- ❑ Prison release
- ❑ Change/cuts in public assistance

2011 Cowlitz Housing Affordability

- 2 BR Fair Market Rent = \$700
- Wage Needed to Afford = \$13.46
- 2008 Est. Mean Renter Wage = \$11.05
- Rent Affordable at Mean Wage = \$575
- 2011 Minimum Wage = \$8.67
- Rent Affordable at Minimum Wage = \$451
- Works Hours Per Week @ Minimum Wage = 62
- 2011 Monthly SSI Payment = \$674
- Affordable SSI Rent = \$202

Homelessness & Health

- People experiencing homelessness experience a disproportionately higher share of health issues:
 - Chronic diseases – hypertension, diabetes, heart and lung diseases, HIV
 - Permanent Physical Disabilities
 - Substance Addiction
 - Mental Illness
 - *A combination of some or all of the above*
 - Rates of serious illness & injury *3-6 times* that of housed people



Homelessness & Health

Life on the streets is brutal and short.

*The average age of death for homeless people
arrives 30 years earlier
than for people with housing.*



Homelessness is Expensive

- People who are homeless visit the ER five times per year, on average
- People who are homeless are hospitalized longer; 3 days to each 1 day for other people
- 80% of ER visits are for an illness that could have been treated with preventive care
- Annual cost of \$18,500 - \$44,400 per person (hospitalization costs only)

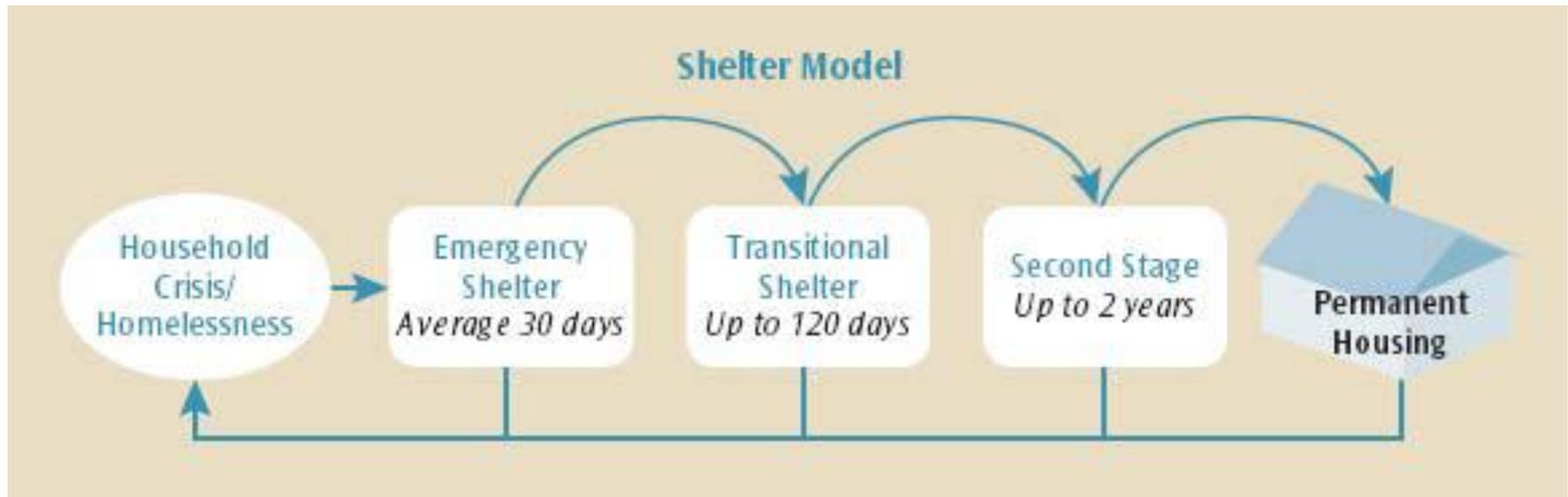
Annual Costs of Homelessness

Families

❑ Sheltering a homeless family	\$40,000
❑ Foster group home placement	\$40,000
❑ Foster child private placement	\$13,000
❑ Individual shelter bed	\$ 8,100
❑ Federal housing voucher	\$ 6,000
❑ Supportive Services	\$ 3,000
❑ Case Management (per person)	\$ 800

Continuum of Care Model

- Housing Readiness Model - Assumes skills learned in present setting can prepare consumers to live in the next setting





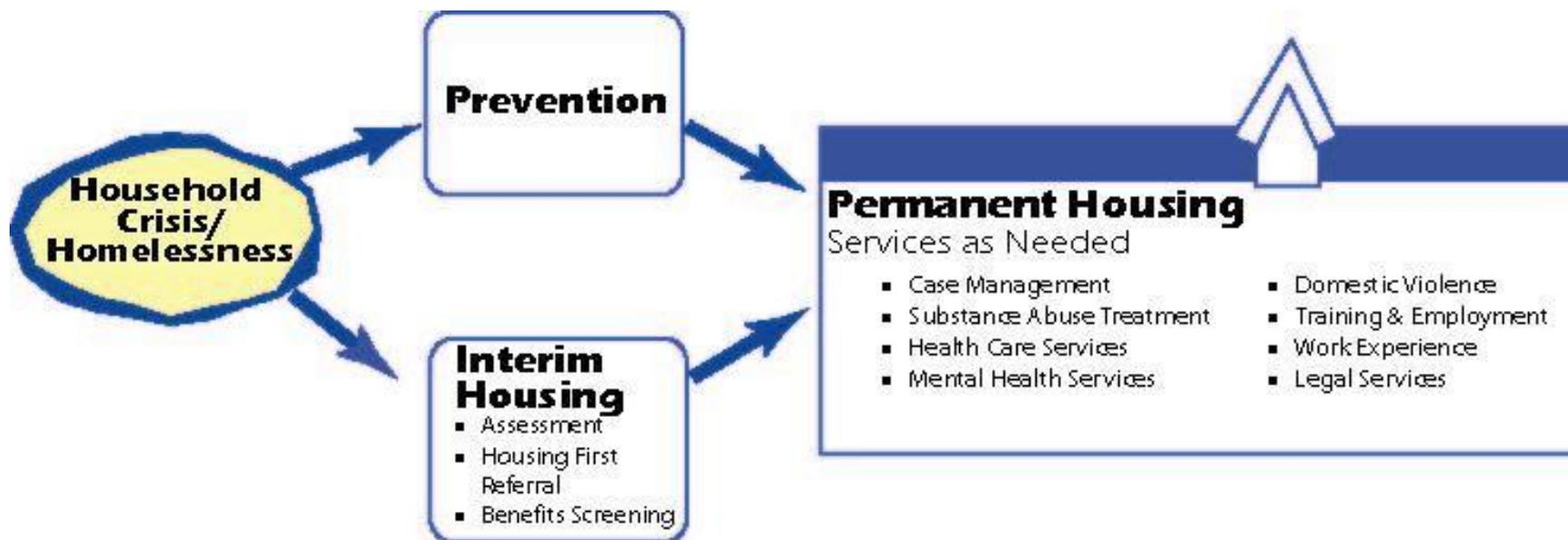
Keystones of a New Approach

- Prevent homelessness whenever possible
- Rapidly re-house people when homelessness can not be prevented
- Provide services that build housing stability and self-sufficiency
- Requires systems change

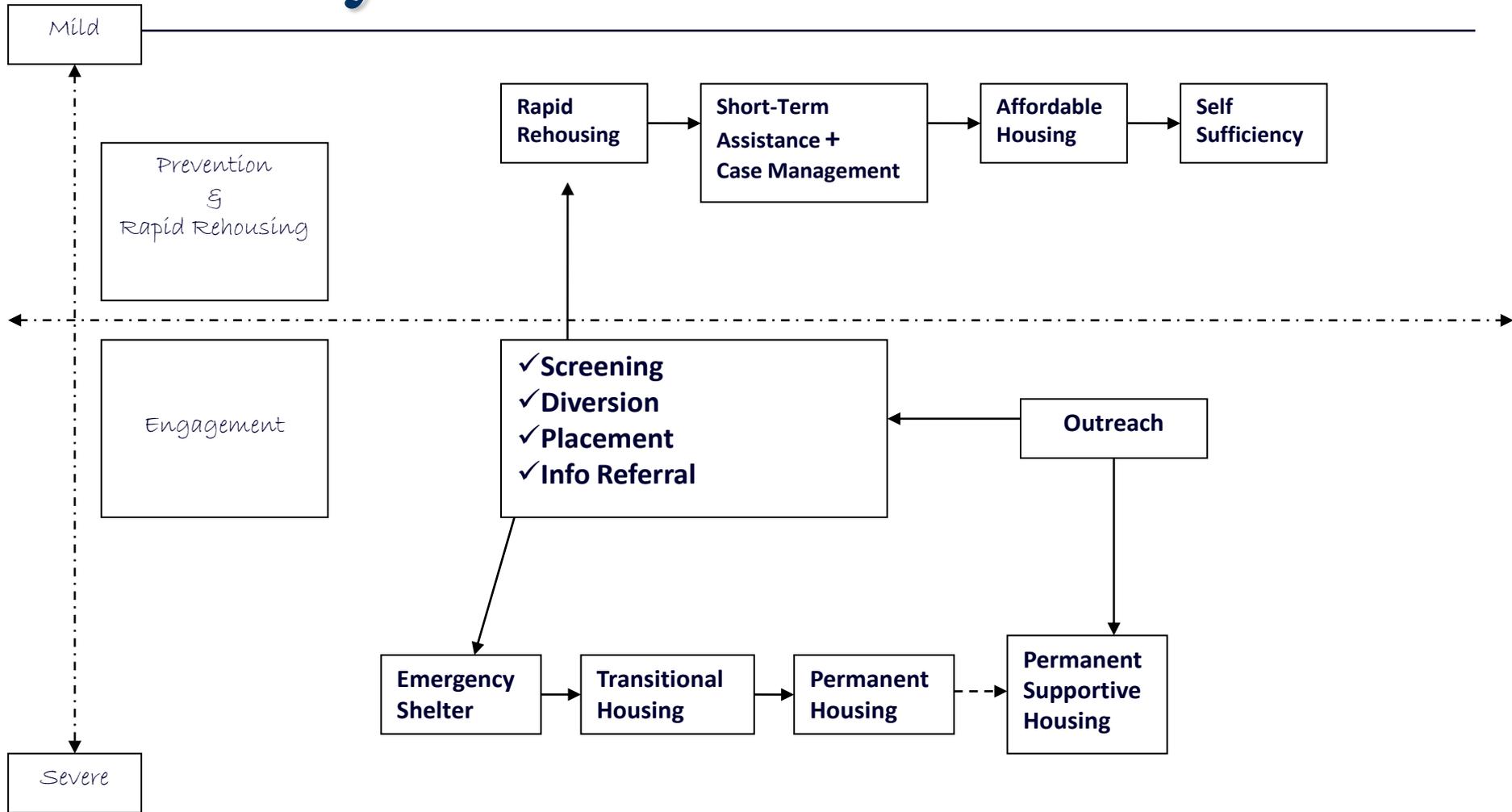
The Housing First Philosophy

- ❑ Homelessness is a housing issue
- ❑ Housing is a tool in recovery from homelessness, not a reward for program compliance
- ❑ People don't need to wait until they are "ready for housing"

The New Model: Housing First



Ideal System



Chronic Homeless





Chronically Homeless Characteristics

- ❑ Psychiatric Disabilities
- ❑ Co-occurring substance use disorders
- ❑ Literally homeless – on the streets and intermittent users of shelters, ER, jail, etc.

Annual Costs of Homelessness

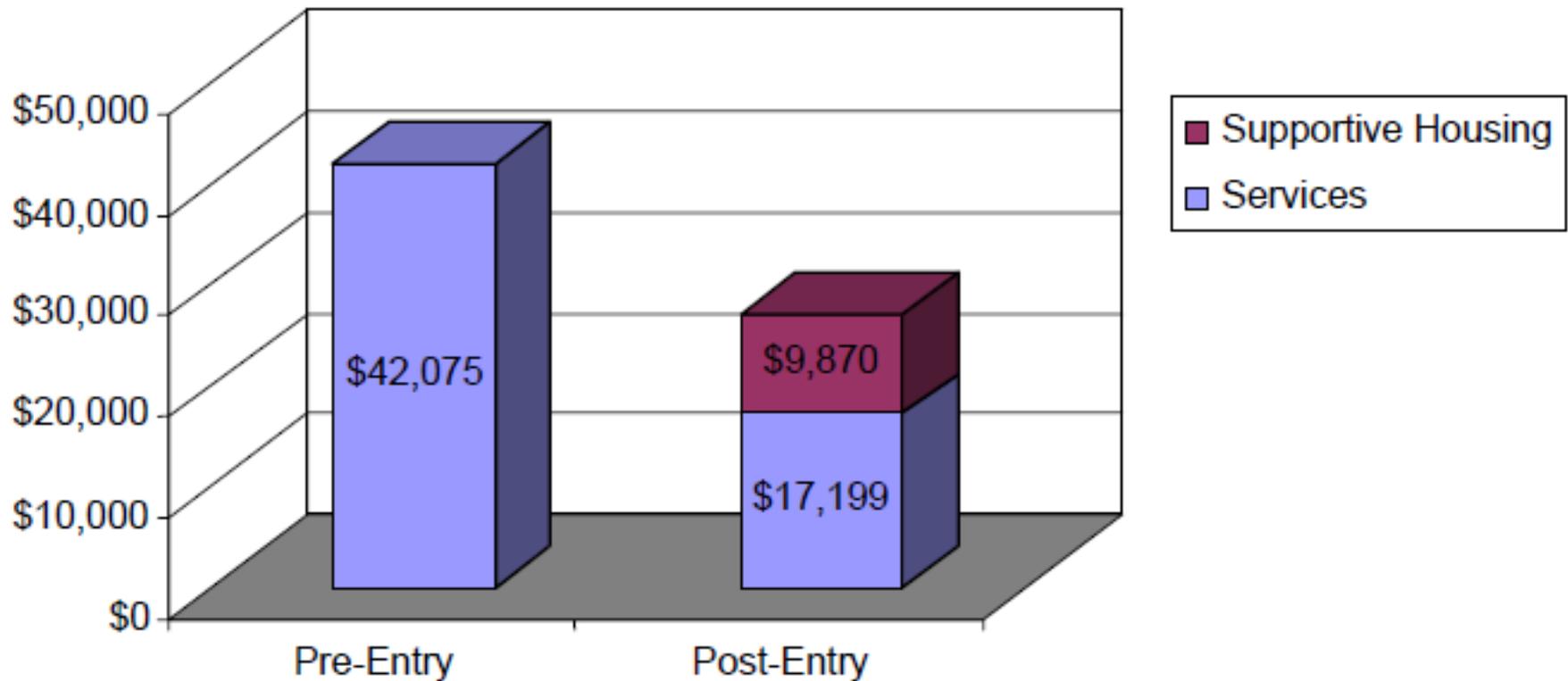
Chronically Homeless

- Services consumed by the un-housed \$40,500
- Prison/jail bed \$24,000

- Supportive housing + services:
 - Maximum \$22,000
 - Minimum \$16,000

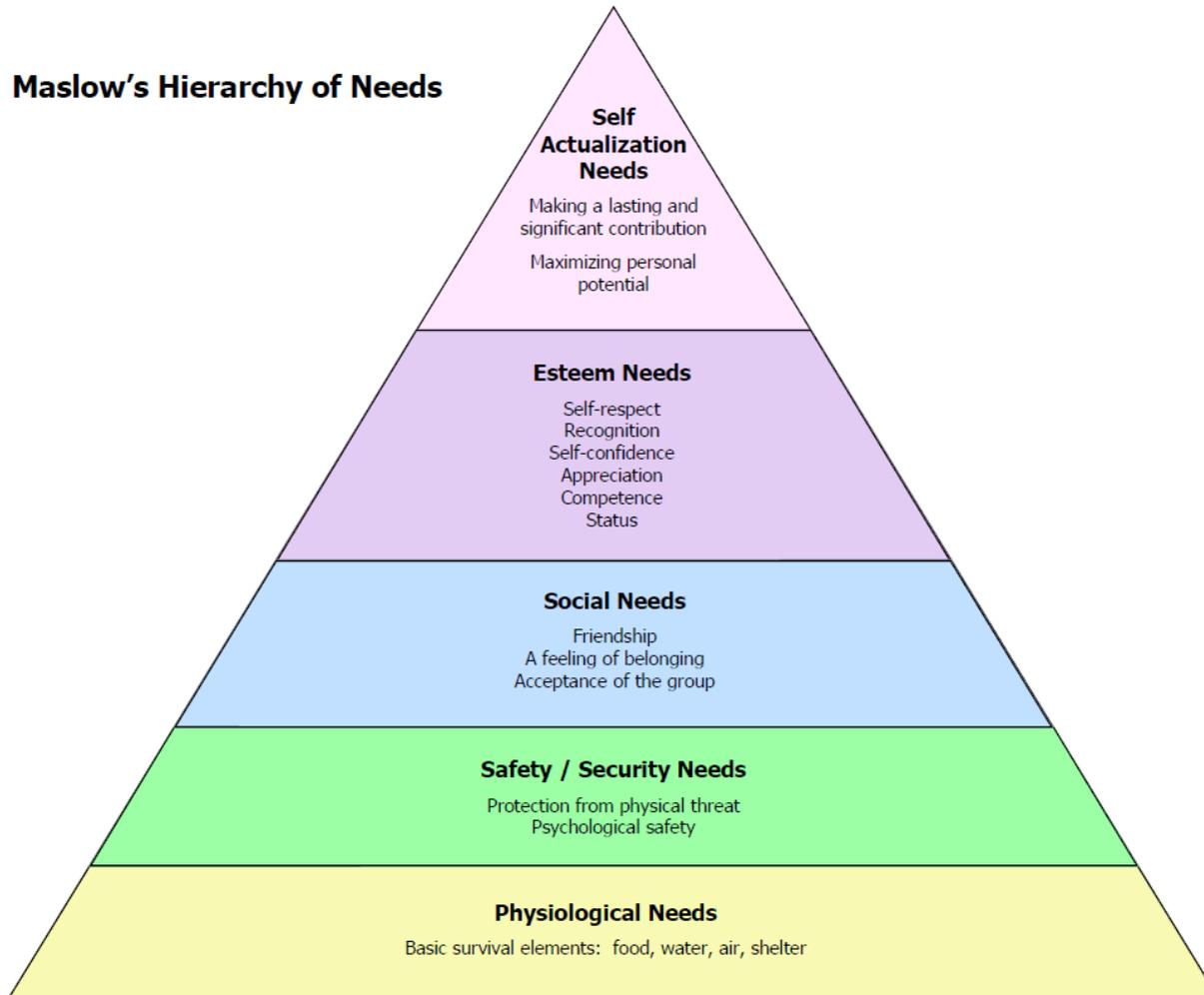
- 20% of Homeless Consume 50% of Resources
 - Emergency Medical, Psychiatric, Detox, Shelters, Law Enforcement, Corrections, etc.

Supportive Housing Saves Money



Why “Housing First”?

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs





Why Housing First?

- It's what people want.
- It minimizes the amount of time somebody is homeless—minimizes the harm.
- Services are most effective when they are delivered when a person is stable in their own home.
- Services are most effective when they are voluntary.
- Providing people with psychiatric disabilities with a home only cures their homelessness. They need support and treatment to help cure or manage their illness



Community Benefits

- ✓ In many cases, the housing first approach is less expensive
- ✓ Housing First works – 85% retain housing over the long term; 95% of families
- ✓ Less utilization of emergency health care resources
- ✓ Fewer arrests/police involvement



The Cowlitz County Ten Year Plan
To End Homelessness
2011



WA Homeless Housing Assistance Act

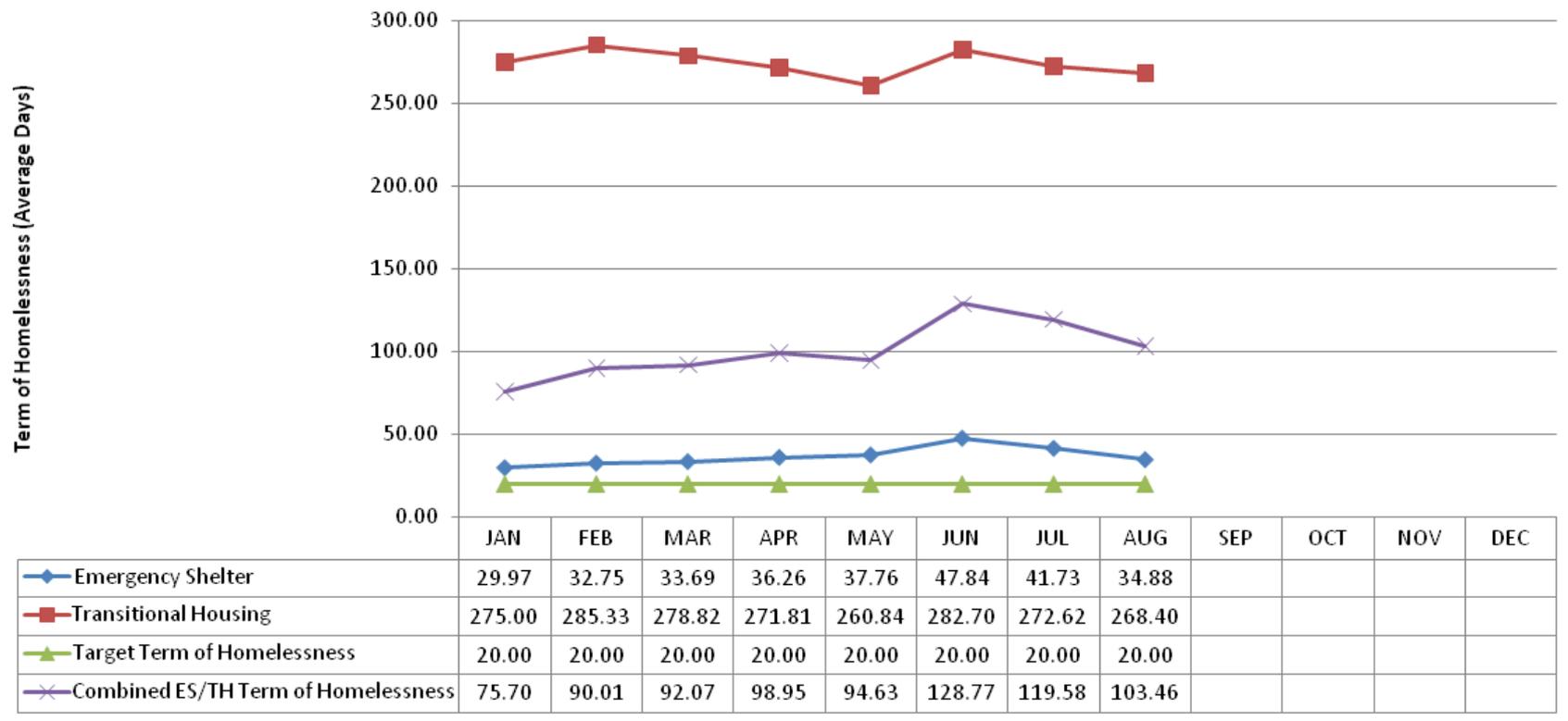
- Collect document recording fee that can be used to address homeless needs within the county
- Develop a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (Stop “managing” it)
- Reduce homelessness by at least 50% by 2015
- Requires **SYSTEM CHANGE**, e.g. Change in How We **THINK** about Homelessness



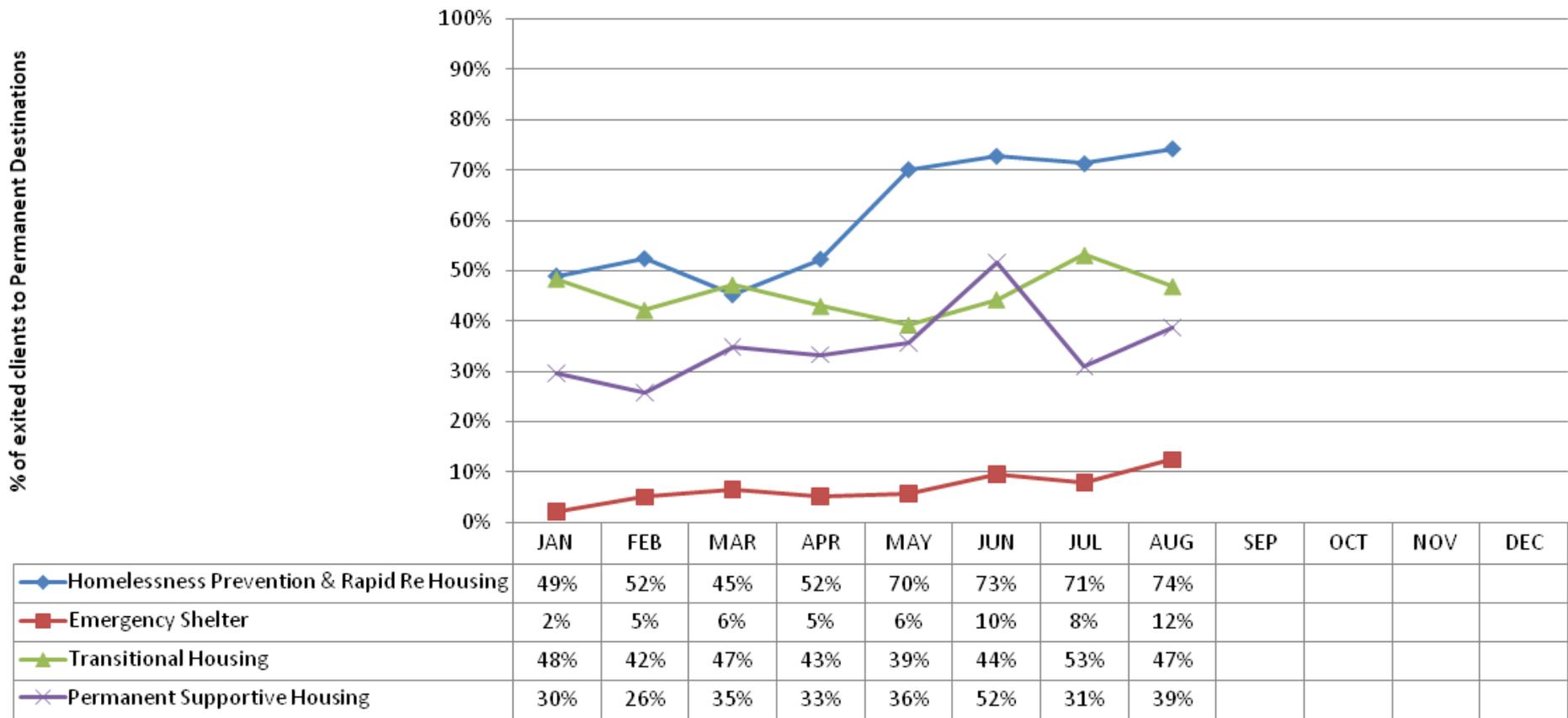
Federal HEARTH Act

- Focus on Outcomes – Measure with HMIS
 - Reduce the number of homeless persons
 - Reduce time spent in homelessness
 - Increase placements in permanent housing (WA)
 - Reduce recidivism into homelessness
- Strategies
 - Prevention Assistance
 - Rapid Rehousing – Rental Assistance using a Housing First Approach
 - Permanent Supportive Housing for Disabled, Chronically Homeless Persons

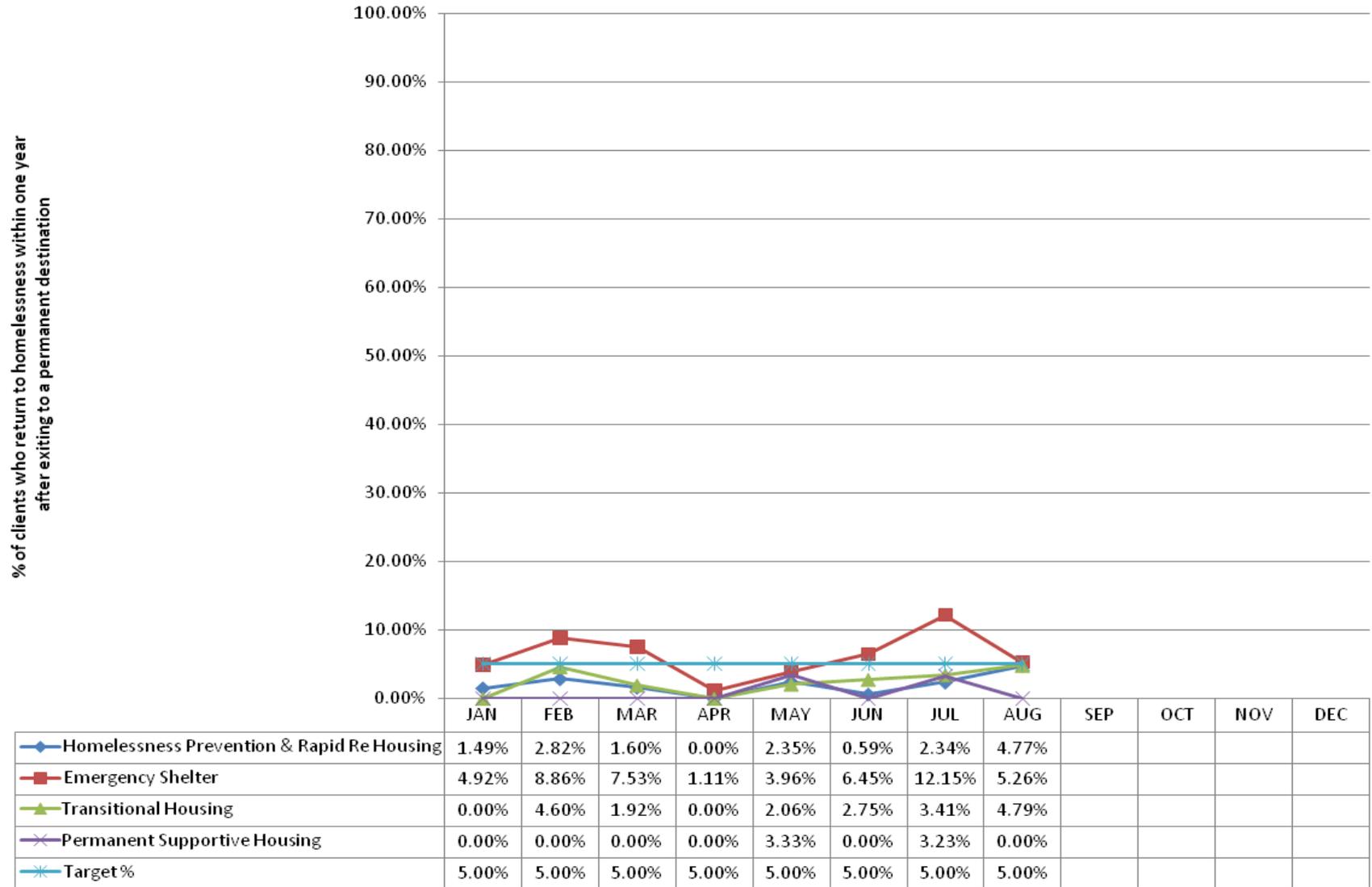
Term of Homelessness



Households Exiting to Permanent Destinations



Percent Returning to Homelessness





WA State Core Strategies

- Targeted prevention & “just enough” assistance
- Immediate placement into permanent housing with short-term rental assistance & transitional services
- Expand use of private-market housing resources
- Increase the inventory of permanent supportive housing for people who are disabled and require supportive services in order to remain housed



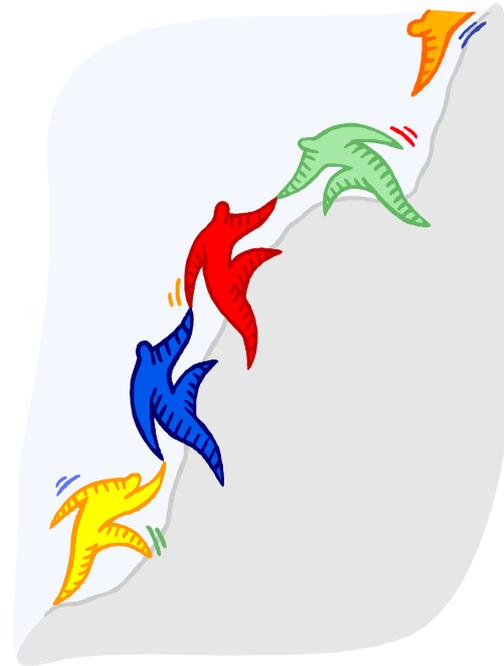
Performance Incentive Payments

- Incentives to house homeless people exiting:
 - Foster care
 - Psychiatric hospitalization
 - Jail/prison
 - Medical hospitalization

- Incentive for committing local funds to permanent supportive housing for disabled people.

Cowlitz Ten Year Plan

- Performance Benchmarks
- Gaps
 - Housing
 - Services
 - People
 - System
- Priorities



Key Beliefs & Core Values



- ❑ There are no “homeless people” but rather people who have lost their homes who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- ❑ We need to give consideration to how our limited public resources can be invested for maximum impact.
- ❑ There is strength in collaboration and we can all make a difference.
- ❑ Homelessness is expensive—it’s better to invest in prevention and solutions.
- ❑ Housing is a basic human right.
- ❑ Our job is to return people to their normal, not our normal.
- ❑ We should tackle the most visible and problematic issues first.



Cowlitz Housing GAPS

- Rapid Rehousing
- Low Barrier Housing & Services
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Interim Housing (shelter model; very short term)
- Inclement Weather Shelter



Cowlitz Service GAPS

- Landlord Incentive Program
- Housing Retention Team/Case Management
- Life Skills
- Urban Rest Stop
- Extreme Weather Shelter
- Coordinated Assessment
- Discharge/Reentry Planning
- SOAR



Cowlitz Population GAPS

- Population Gaps (Un-served Populations)
 - Chronically Homeless
 - People with Multiple/High Service Needs
 - mental illness, co-occurring disorders, etc.
 - People Exiting Systems of Care
 - jail, foster care, hospitals, prison, psychiatric hospitals
 - Youth



System Deficiencies

- Short-Term Rental Assistance (replenish funding)
- Rapid Rehousing (add program flexibility)
- Permanent Supportive Housing (for disabled)
- Affordable Housing (income-restricted)
- Behavioral Health Services to Homeless Adults



Performance Benchmarks

- ❑ Reduce the number of unsheltered persons
- ❑ Reduce the number of newly homeless
- ❑ Reduce average length of homeless episodes
- ❑ Increase placements to permanent housing
- ❑ Reduce recidivism to less than 5% over a 2-year period

Priorities

- Fund activities that fill gaps
 - Chronically Homeless
 - Multiple/High Needs – e.g. mental illness, co-occurring disorders
 - People Exiting Institutions – foster care, jail, hospital
 - Youth

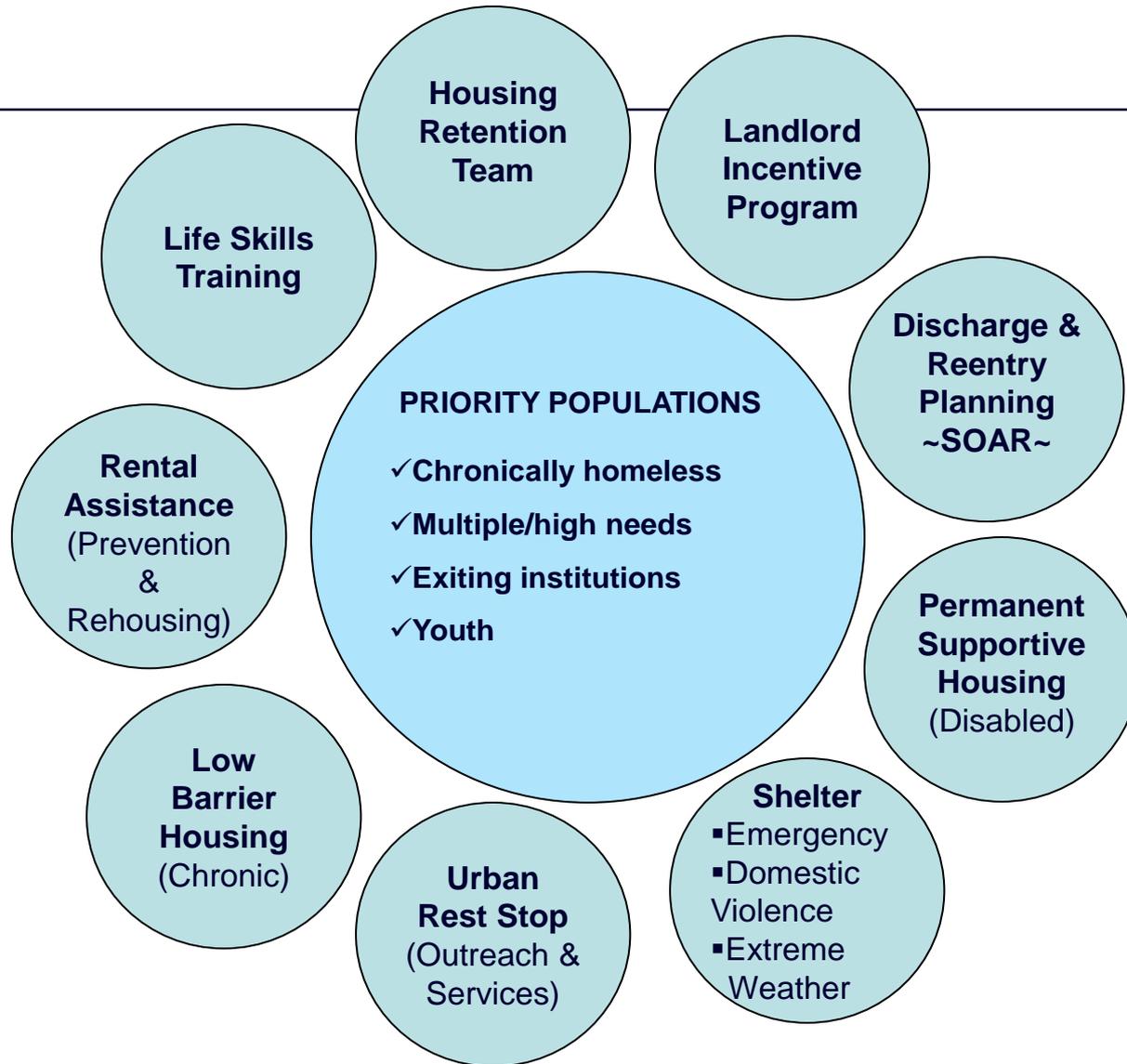
- Fund projects to fill deficiencies in the system
 - Landlord Incentives + Case Management + Rental Assistance
 - Low Barrier Housing
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Urban Rest Stop
 - Extreme Weather Shelter



Cowlitz “Housing First” Approach

- Emphasis on Prevention & Rapid Rehousing to meet Performance Benchmarks
 - Eviction Prevention
 - Rapid Rehousing + Transitional Services
 - Permanent Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities

Menu of Services



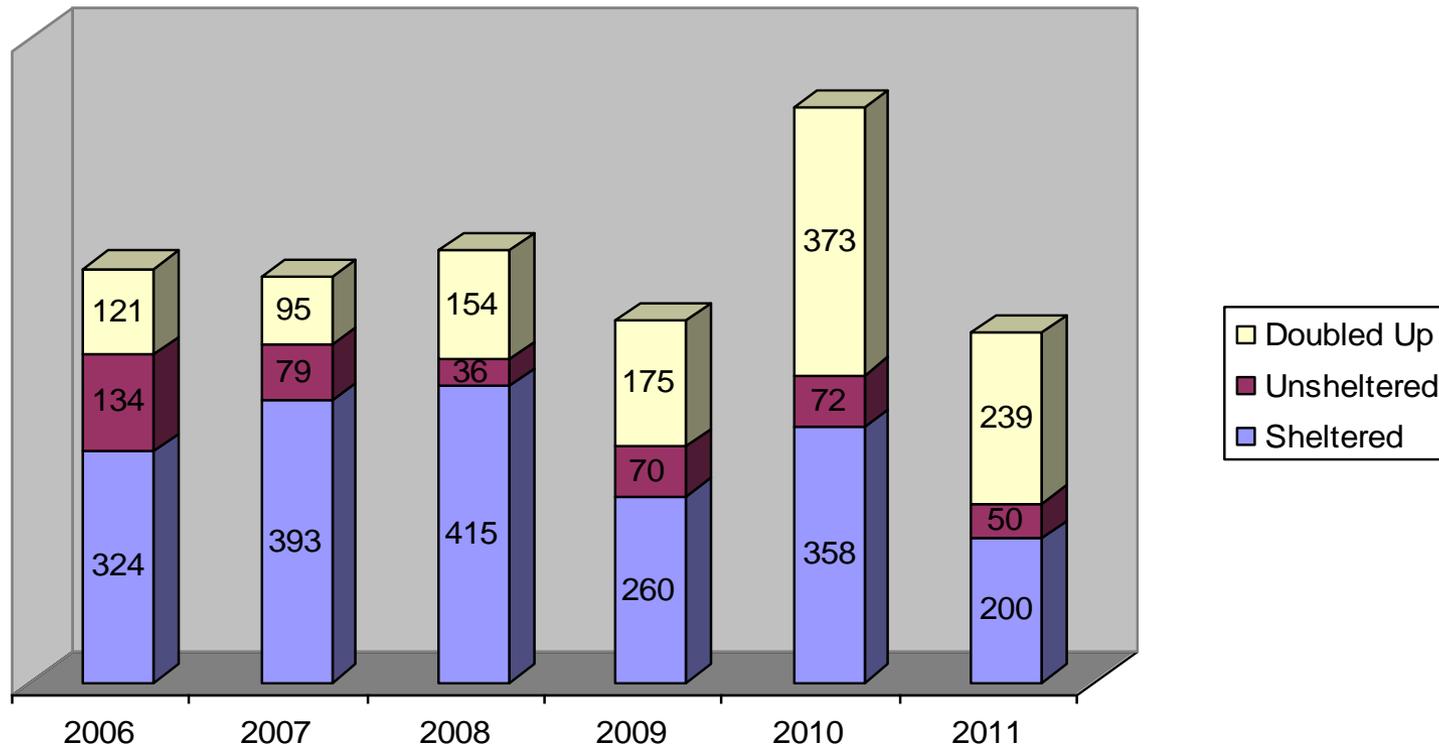


Performance & Accountability

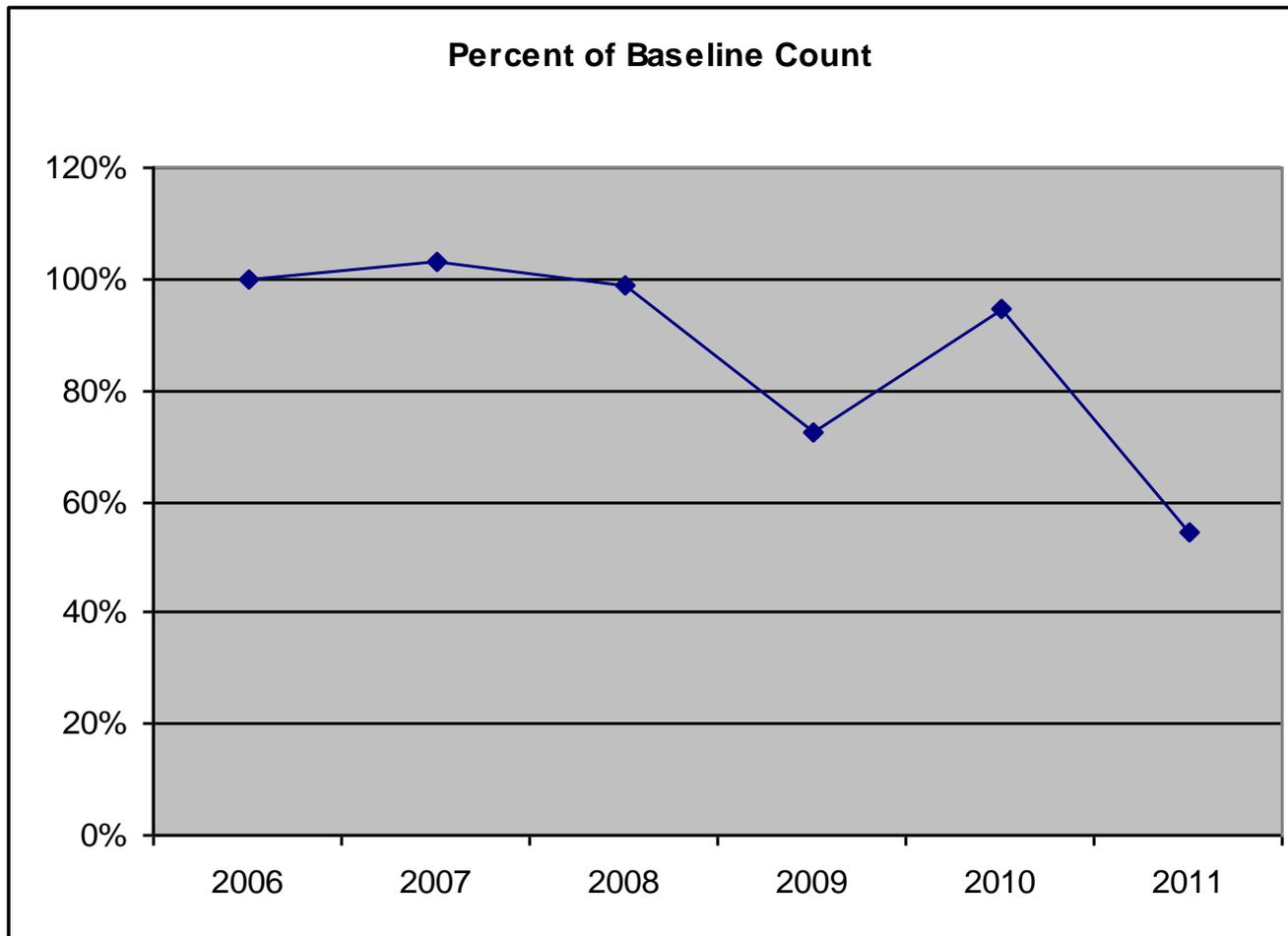
- Use performance data and an annual review process to keep the plan focused on what is working
 - Use HMIS, Point In Time Counts, contract performance data and other sources to evaluate how the system is performing and where improvements are needed
 - Conduct an annual evaluation and refinement of current funding priorities

Cowlitz County Progress

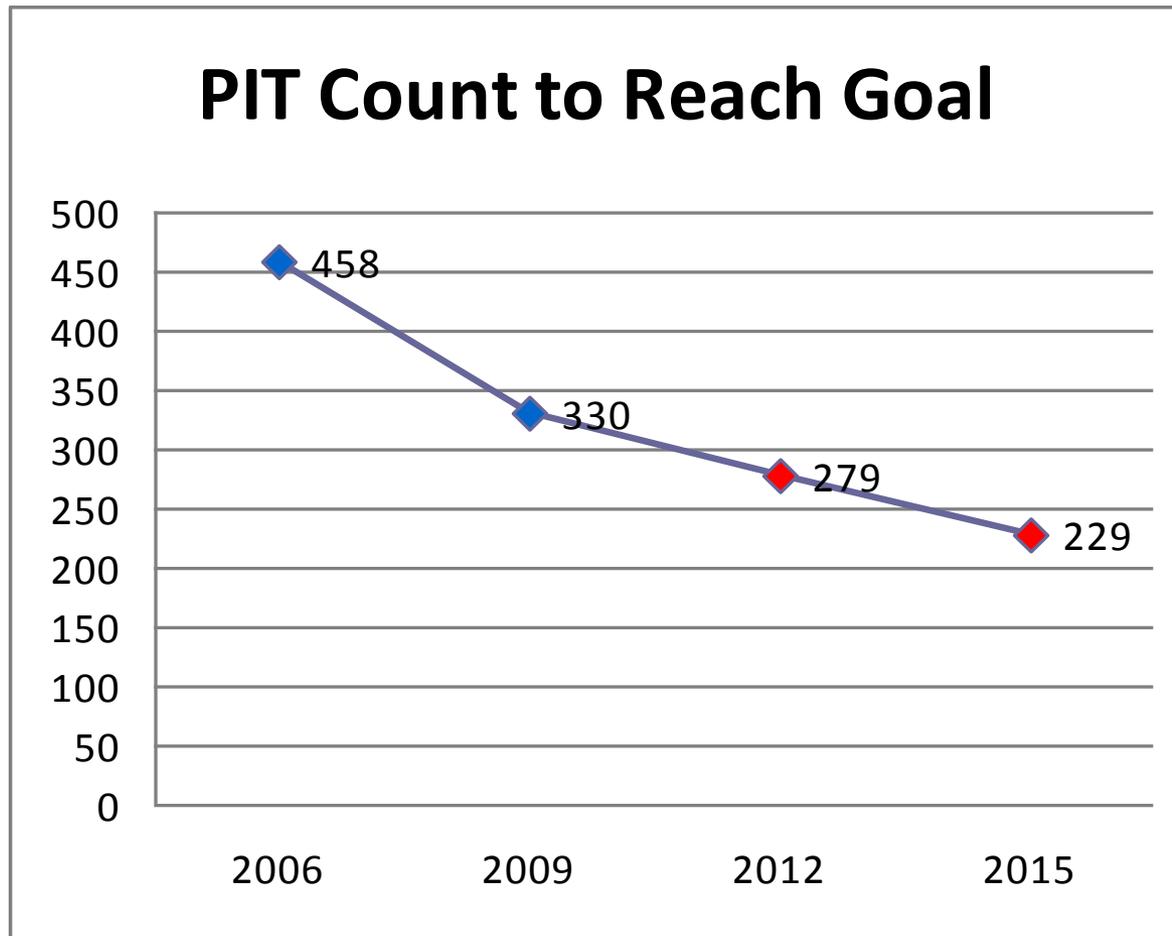
**Trends in Homeless Count by Housing Status
2006 - 2011 Point In Time Count**



Change in Homelessness



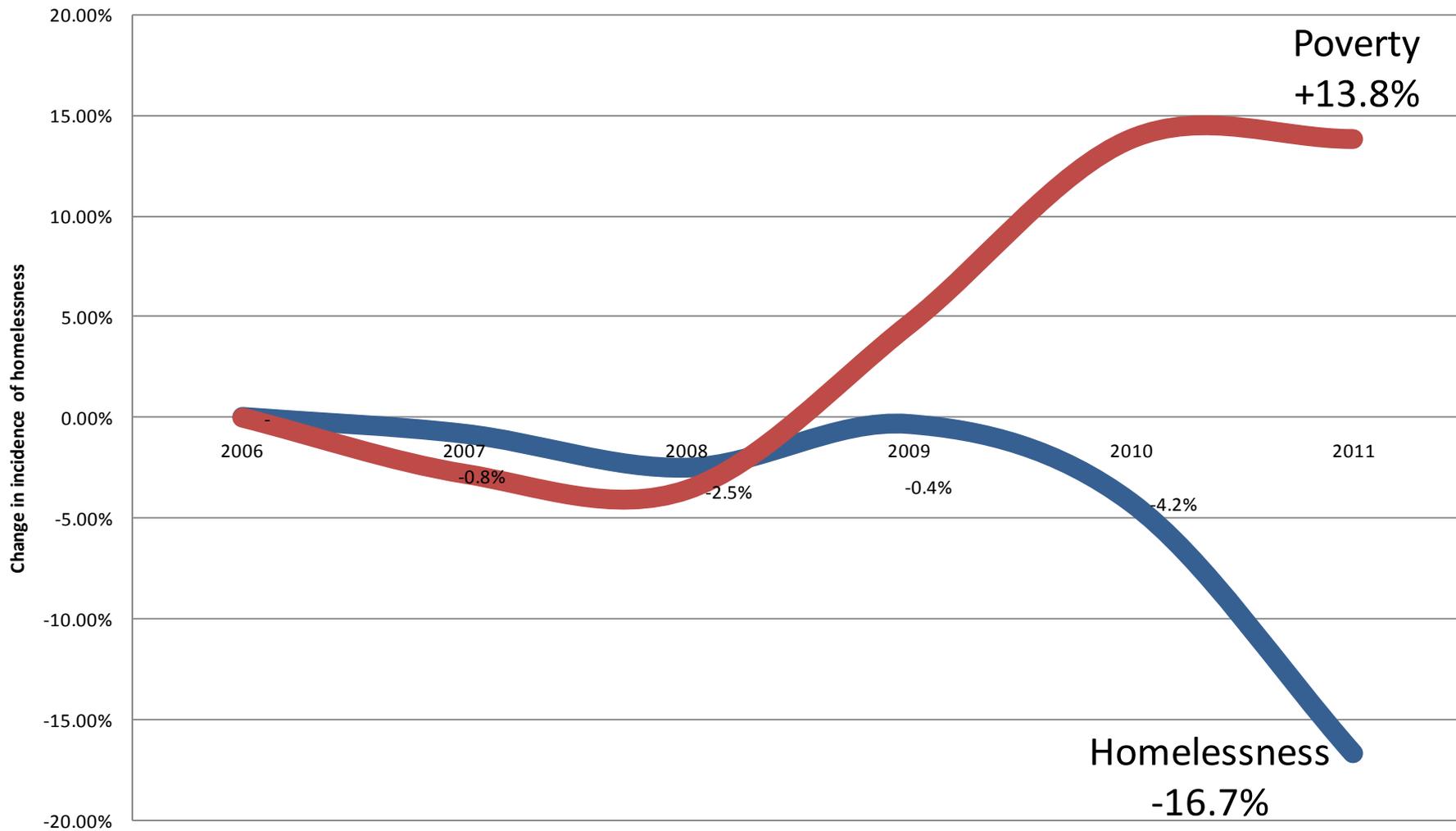
Trajectory to Reach 50% Reduction



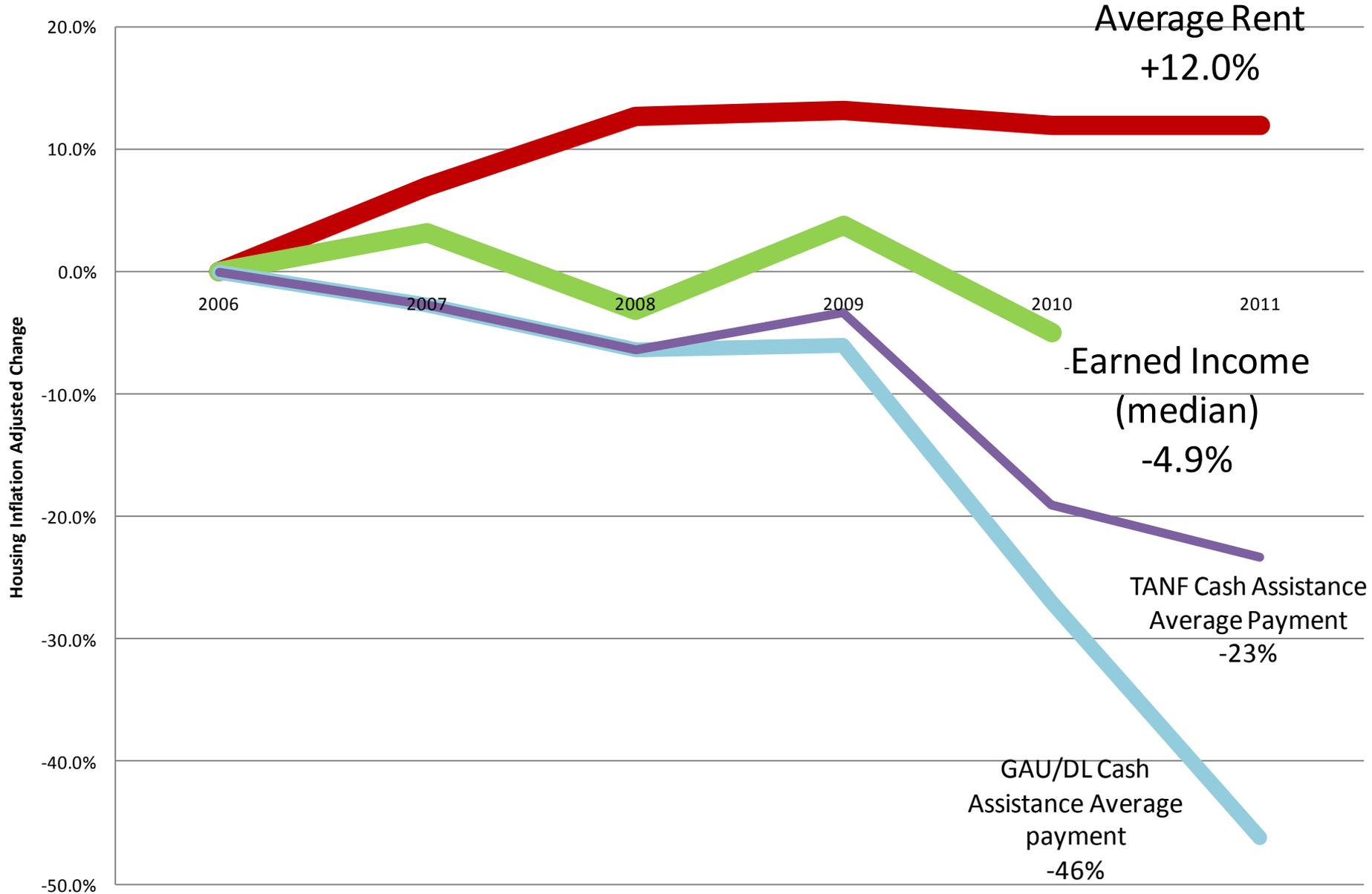
WA State Trends

- Homelessness is down 16.7% ↓
 - Reduced 62% for families ↓
- Success despite unprecedented impacts of the financial crisis
 - Increased Unemployment ↑ 98% (from 5.3% to 9.3%)
 - Increased Unemployment/Underemployment ↑ 77% (from 10.4% to 18.4%)
 - Increased Poverty: ↑ 13.4% (from 11.8% to 13.8%)
 - Declining Earned Income: ↓ 4.9%
 - Cuts in Social Services
 - Increasing Rents: ↑ 12%
 - Fewer Rental Vacancies: ↓ 26% (from 6.1% to 4.5%)

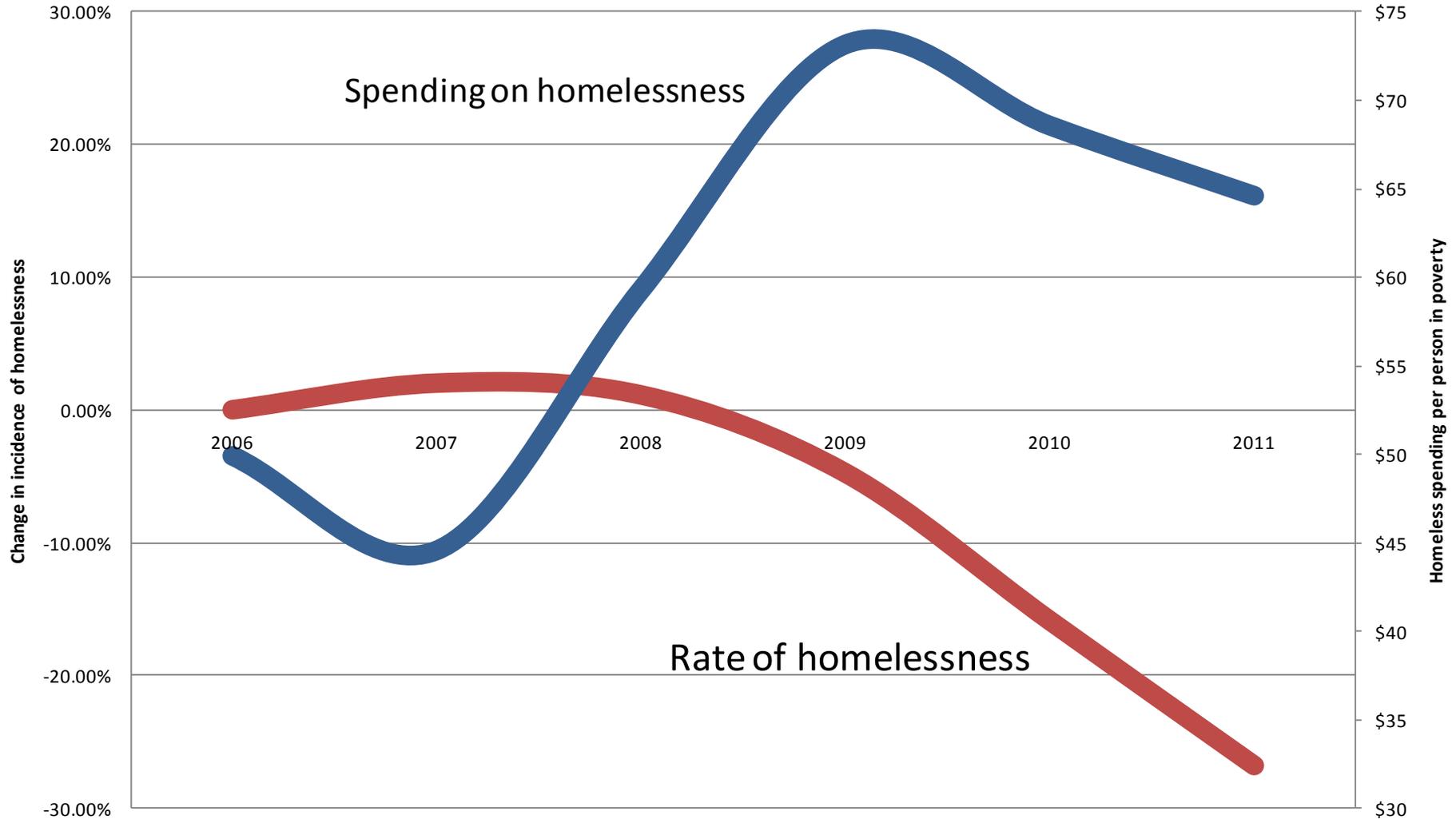
Despite poverty going up, homelessness has gone down



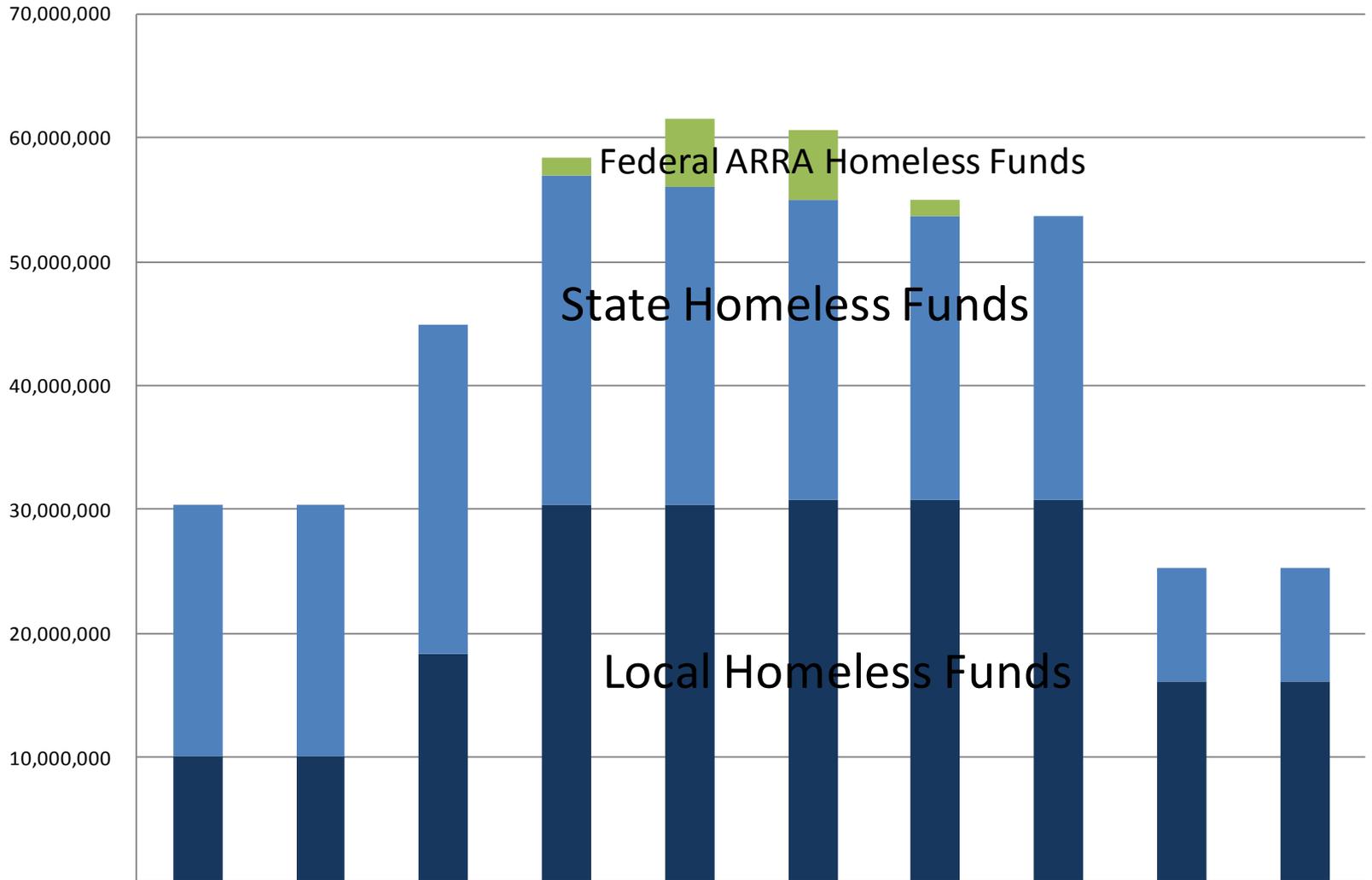
Rent has increased, but earned income and cash assistance has declined



Increased spending on homeless housing, decline in homelessness

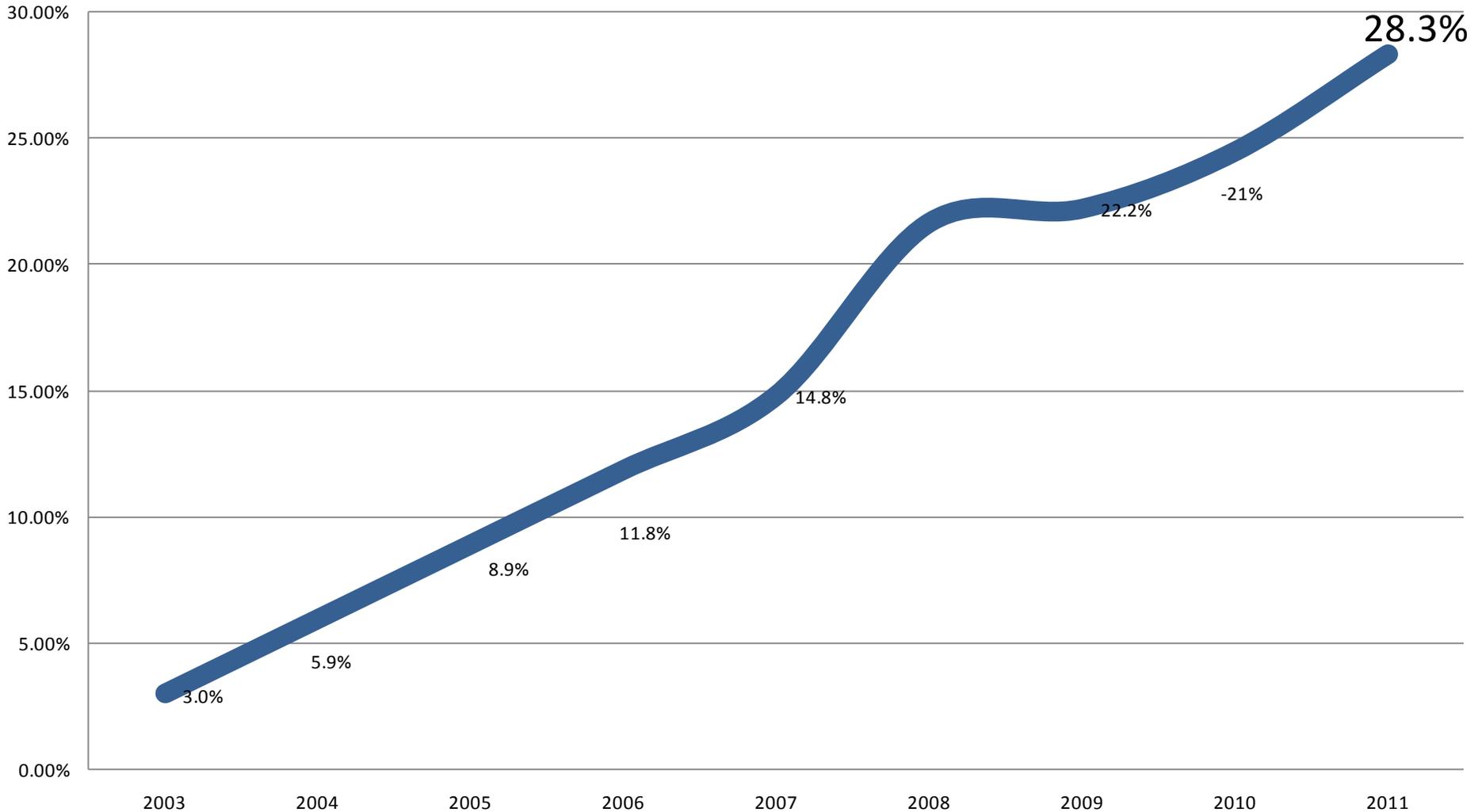


History of Homeless Funding



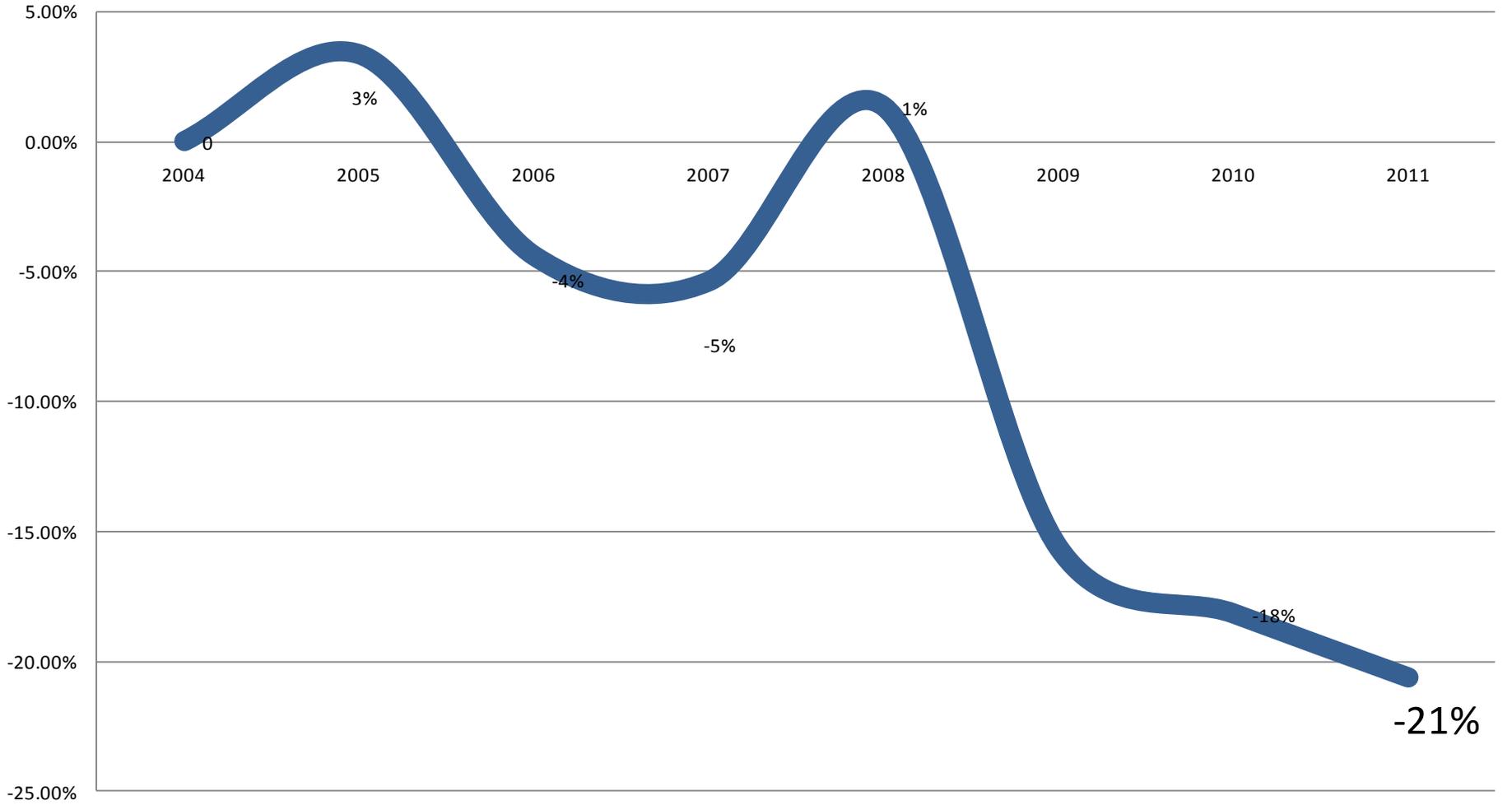
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Federal HPRP				1,382,227	5,528,906	5,528,906	1,382,227			
State Homeless (10B, 12C, GFS)	20,295,500	20,295,500	26,629,500	26,629,500	25,709,500	24,321,000	22,923,000	22,923,000	9,072,200	9,072,200
Local Homeless	10,077,621	10,077,621	18,314,700	30,318,762	30,318,762	30,702,240	30,702,240	30,702,240	16,166,880	16,166,880

Growth of severely low-income households with severe rent burdens

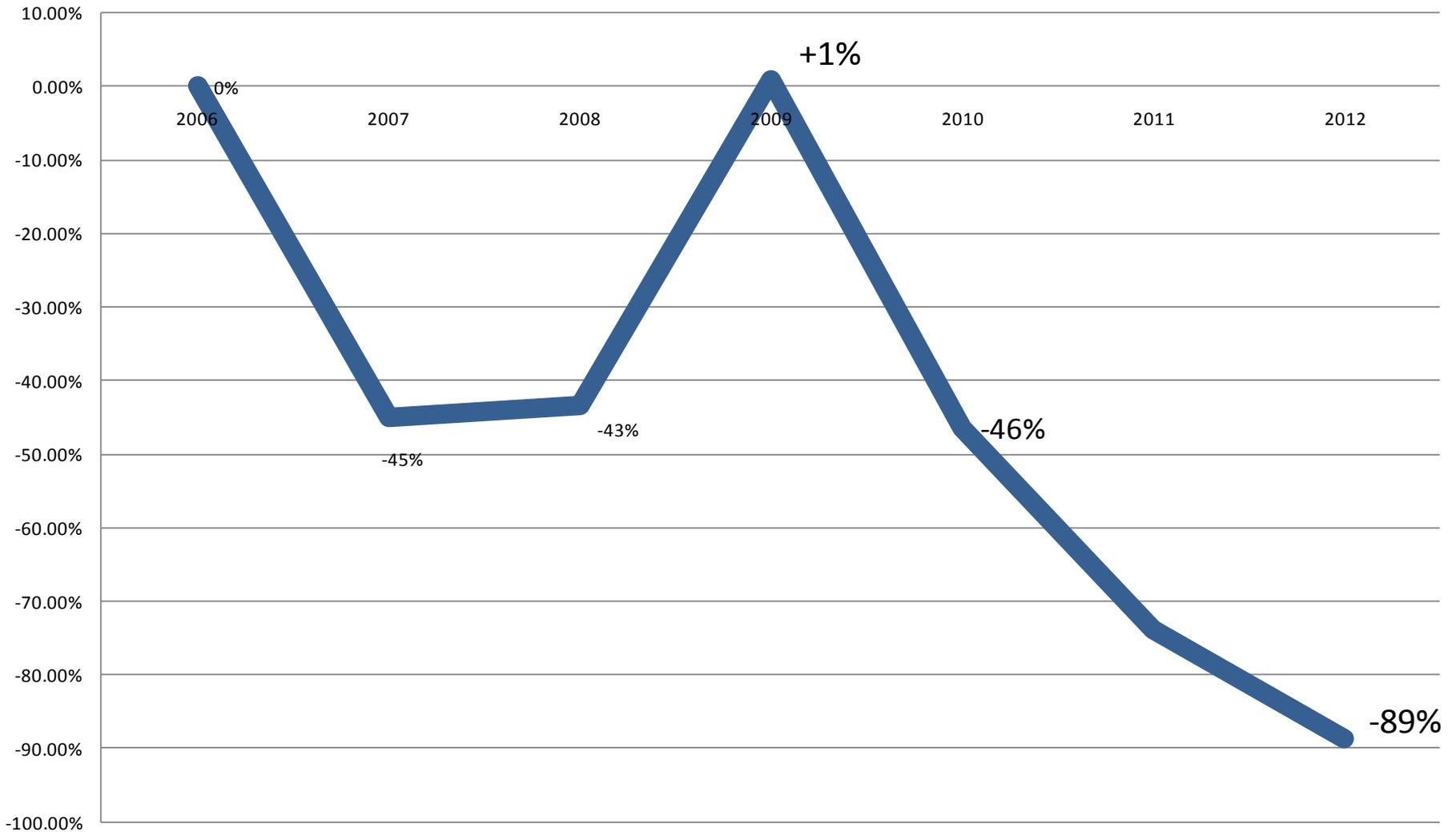


Change in Housing Choice Voucher Spending (Section 8)

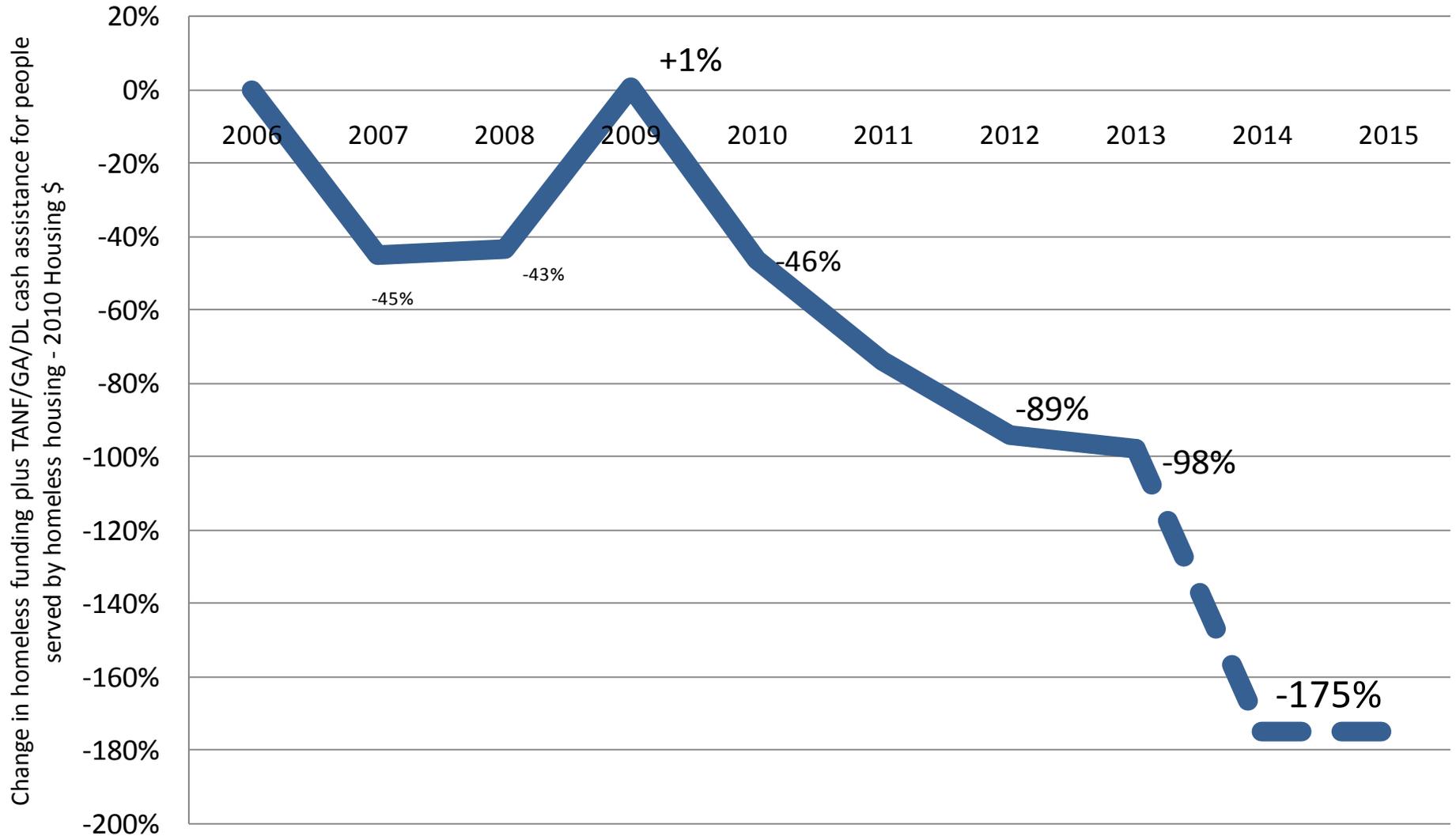
Per person in poverty, rent inflation adjusted



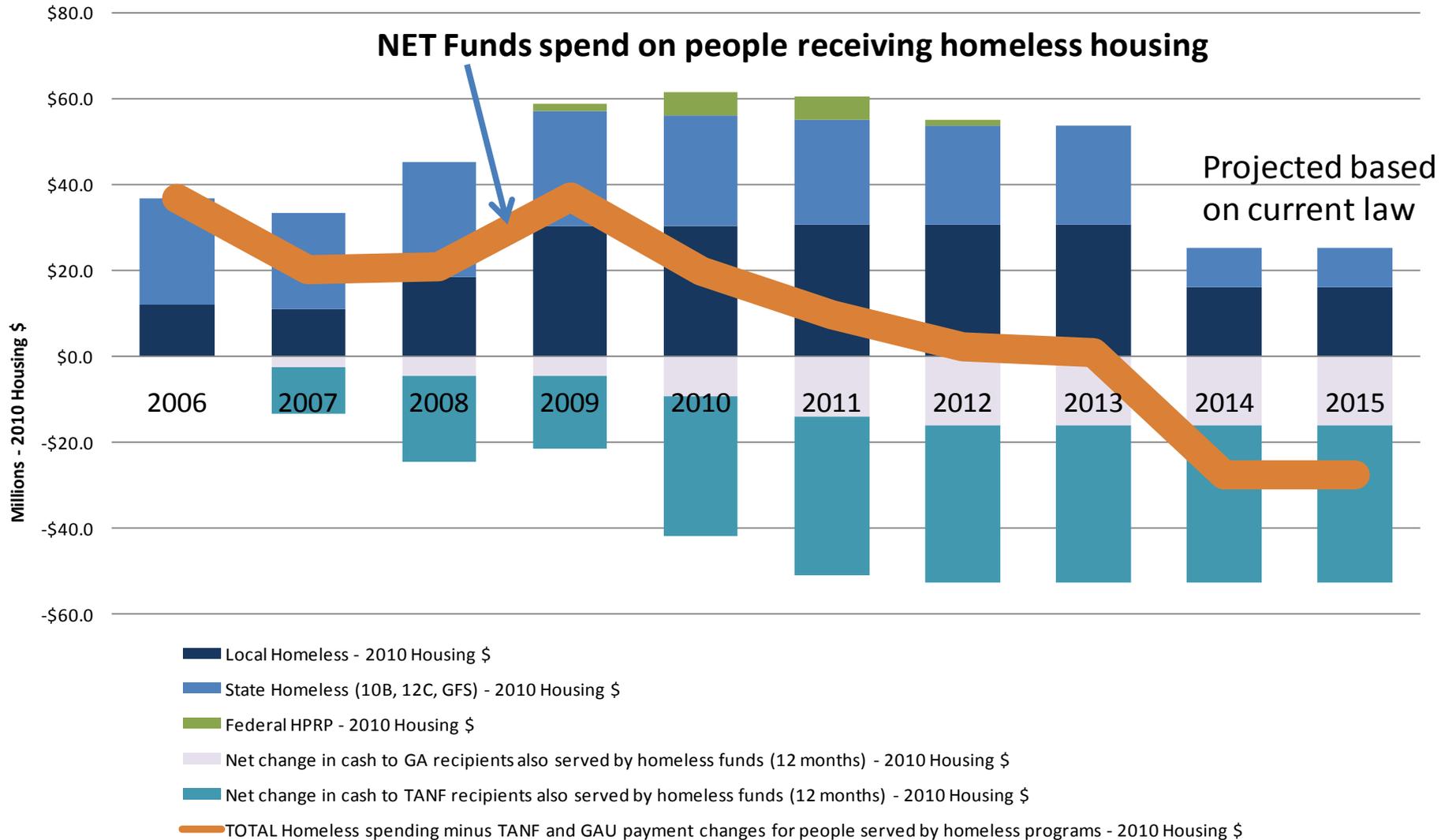
Increases in homeless funding offset by declines in TANF/GA/DL cash payments to people served by homeless programs



Increases in homeless funding offset by declines in TANF/GA/DL cash payments to people served by homeless programs



Increases in homeless funding offset by declines in value of TANF/GA/DL cash payments to people served by homeless programs





Short-term rent-assistance is effective

- Average of \$1,451 of assistance per household

- Reduced homelessness 58%
7-9 months post-assistance (as compared to a matched control group)

Well-designed re-entry housing for people exiting from prison can save state funds

- Re-entry housing on average costs \$9,812
- A year in prison costs \$34,615
- Average prison stay 24.6 months
- 100 people provided re-entry housing prevents 19 from re-entering prison
- Cost of 100 people provided re-entry housing: \$981,200
- Cost of 19 people re-entering prison: \$1,320,851

- **NET SAVINGS: \$339,651**

Current law: Estimated change in annual number of people experiencing homelessness due to funding decline

