

RCW 43.185C.005 Findings. Despite laudable efforts by all levels of government, private individuals, nonprofit organizations, and charitable foundations to end homelessness, the number of homeless persons in Washington is unacceptably high. The state's homeless population, furthermore, includes a large number of families with children, youth, and employed persons. The legislature finds that the fiscal and societal costs of homelessness are high for both the public and private sectors, and that ending homelessness should be a goal for state and local government.

The legislature finds that there are many causes of homelessness, including a shortage of affordable housing; a shortage of family-wage jobs which undermines housing affordability; a lack of an accessible and affordable health care system available to all who suffer from physical and mental illnesses and chemical and alcohol dependency; domestic violence; and a lack of education and job skills necessary to acquire adequate wage jobs in the economy of the twenty-first century.

The support and commitment of all sectors of the statewide community is critical to the chances of success in ending homelessness in Washington. While the provision of housing and housing-related services to the homeless should be administered at the local level to best address specific community needs, the legislature also recognizes the need for the state to play a primary coordinating, supporting, and monitoring role. There must be a clear assignment of responsibilities and a clear statement of achievable and quantifiable goals. Systematic statewide data collection on homelessness in Washington must be a critical component of such a program enabling the state to work with local governments to count homeless persons and assist them in finding housing.

The systematic collection and rigorous evaluation of homeless data, a search for and implementation through adequate resource allocation of best practices, and the systematic measurement of progress toward interim goals and the ultimate goal of ending homelessness are all necessary components of a statewide effort to end homelessness in Washington by July 1, 2015. [2005 c 484 § 1.]