

Public Health – Seattle & King County Homeless Services Overview

King County Board of Health

2.15.24

Jessica Knaster Wasse (she/her)

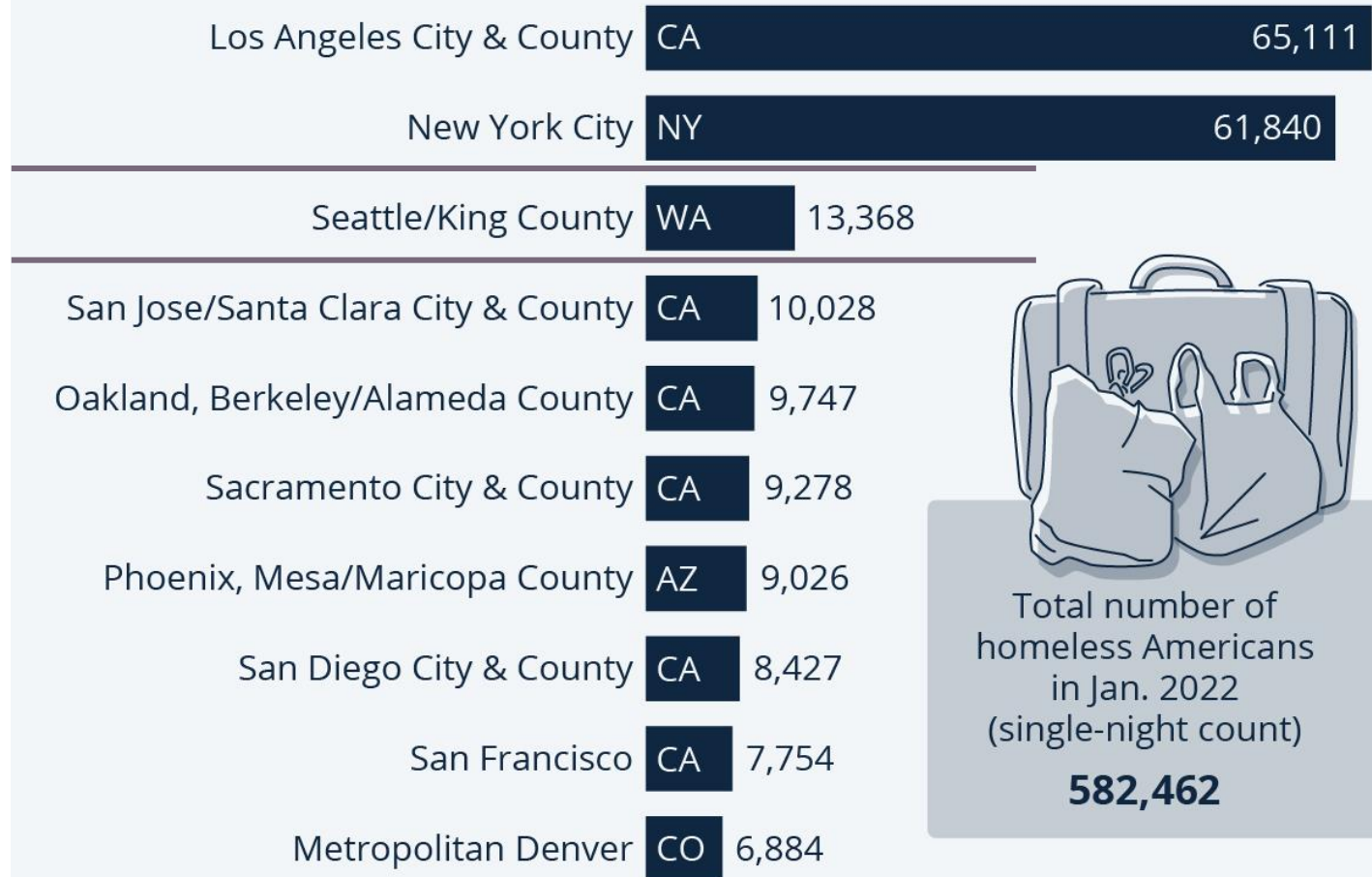
Healthcare for the Homeless, PHSKC

King County remains among the U.S. jurisdictions with the largest number of people experiencing homelessness.

Single-night counts are a standard method but only represent a fraction of the total count.

The King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) Cross-System Homelessness Analysis found that at least **40,871** people experienced homelessness in 2020.

CoCs* with the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness in 2022

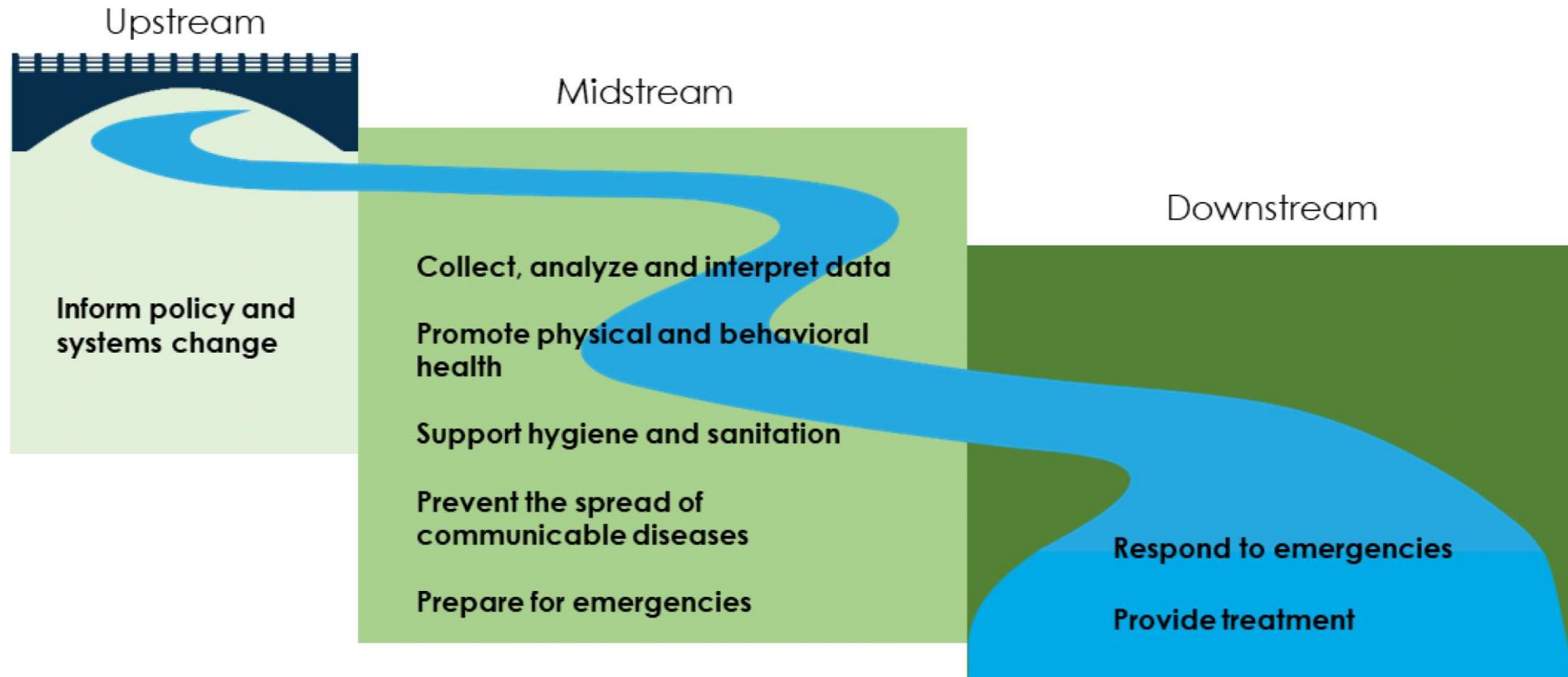


Total number of homeless Americans in Jan. 2022 (single-night count)
582,462

* CoC - Continuums of Care
(local planning bodies coordinating homelessness services)
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Public Health's Role

PHSKC works to improve the health of people living homeless through a continuum of activities ranging from system change to health promotion to treatment. Providing health care for people experiencing homelessness represents our largest body of work.



Health-Related Needs for those Experiencing Homelessness

Limited bathroom access, business closures leave Seattle's homeless population vulnerable amid Covid-19 pandemic

Kate Walters
April 08, 2020 / 5:57 pm



Homeless encampment along a road in the Sodo area of Seattle.

KUOW Photo/Dahn Ryan

Health | Local News | Project Homeless

It's hard to get drug treatment while homeless. I want to change that.

Aug. 12, 2019 at 6:00 am | Updated Aug. 22, 2019 at 10:04 am



1 of 3 | King County currently has a mobile medical van to treat wounds and prescribe medication-assisted treatment downtown, but the new "street medicine" team will expand on those efforts and take outreach into shelters... (Ken Lambert / The Seattle Times) More

Local News | Northwest | Project Homeless | Weather

Seattle area cold-weather shelters open as temperatures tumble

Feb. 22, 2023 at 7:12 am | Updated Feb. 22, 2023 at 4:13 pm



Mats are laid out on the floor of the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall on Dec. 28. The Exhibition Hall will be open as an overnight warming shelter through next Wednesday for at least 100 adults. (Jennifer Buchanan / The Seattle Times)

Access to hygiene services as a basic right & matter of human dignity

Low barrier and non-judgmental support for people who use substances

Safe spaces to be inside during inclement weather

Addressing the opioid crisis

- 1,124 opioid-involved overdose deaths in King County in 2023, a 40% increase over 2022
- Exponential increase in overdose deaths since 2019, with a 20% jump between 2019 and 2020, and an additional 39% jump between 2020 and 2021.
- Disparities in overdose deaths with highest rates among American Indian/Alaska Native and Black residents; people experiencing homelessness, and communities located in Seattle and South King County
- 46% of individuals deceased in 2023 were currently or recently homeless

[2022 Overdose Death Report](#) and [Overdose Death Dashboard](#), PHSKC

[Health](#) | [Law & Justice](#) | [Local News](#) | [Northwest](#) | [Puget Sound](#)

King County's 2023 fentanyl deaths top 1,050, surpassing record

Dec. 29, 2023 at 6:00 am | Updated Dec. 29, 2023 at 6:00 am





Questions