



# 2015-2019 Human Services Strategic Plan



City of Tacoma



Neighborhood and Community Development  
Department, Human Services Division

June 2014

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (Placeholder)**

DRAFT

# Context for the Plan

## Background

The City of Tacoma has a strong history of commitment to addressing the needs of residents. For over 40 years the City has played multiple roles – leaders, collaborator, partner, funder, convener, and provider. The City began its major involvement in providing human services in the mid-1960s. Two main approaches were adopted by the City in addressing human service needs:

- direct provision of services by City employees to seniors, youth, children and persons with disabilities, and
- contracted services for transportation, home repair, drug rehabilitation, and other needs.

In the early 1980s, the City shifted its emphasis to planning, contracting, providing technical assistance and coordination. Its direct service role was confined to services for senior citizens and to provision of Child Care Resource and Referral as a brokered service.

The 1994 Human Services Strategic Plan adopted a policy of maintaining existing direct services, with any additional growth focused in the planning and contracting area. In the mid-1990s, the City and other funders developed a strong outcomes-oriented evaluation focus for human services. Outcome orientation remains a strong focus for the City and its funding partners today.

Since 2000 the City has increased its emphasis on partnering, collaborating and coordinating with key players in the community to address significant human services issues. These issues have included the chronic street population, homelessness, truancy, domestic violence, mental health and substance use disorders, crime prevention, gang reduction, early childhood learning and development, youth development, and workforce development.

## A New Focus: Equity and Empowerment

The 2015-2019 Human Services Strategic Plan builds directly on the previous plan and is the result of broad, diverse community input, City staff recommendations, and strategy development with the City's Human Services Commission. In developing this plan, the Human Services Division received a powerful charge from the Mayor and City Council: build a plan that includes the voices of people from all backgrounds in the community and focuses on priorities and goals that help to eliminate the underlying drivers that perpetuate inequity – across race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age.

With this framework, the Human Services Division and Kennedy Consulting LLC conducted research that included: interviews with 21 key informants and three small groups of state and local partners and nine consumer focus groups. The consultants also conducted an analysis of 45 state, county, and local data sources to identify:

- demographic characteristics,
- economic conditions,
- educational attainment, employment characteristics, and
- issues related to the City's current human service priorities.

At the same time, City staff conducted GIS mapping of local conditions and the human services system using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data and United Way 211 data, including:

- the location/distribution of programs offering services to Tacoma residents,
- the number and location of clients served by city-funded programs,
- the location of programs currently funded, and
- the geography of cost-burdened households, race and language barriers across the City.

These data-gathering efforts culminated in an environmental scan that provided a powerful context for understanding human services needs and opportunities in the community and developing a strategy to address them.

The scan was presented to the Tacoma Human Services Commission and Community Review Panel in two visioning sessions. In these sessions, community partners had the opportunity to envision a desired future where the human services needs of all residents are being met. The result is a long-term community vision and strategic direction for Tacoma's human services system that will position the City to address current human service challenges with an eye to the future and help drive structural inclusion and equity for all groups.

## **Community Recommendations for Updating the Plan**

The environmental scan and visioning processes generated some compelling conclusions and a few recommendations for the City in planning and carrying out its human services strategy. The vision, values, priorities, and goals included in this plan are designed to address these recommendations, as well as build on and continue the City's focus over the last decade.

## Conclusions

- **A voice for equity and empowerment:** Tacoma is a uniquely diverse community – racially/ethnically, socio-economically, and politically. Participants in the environmental scan pointed to the critical role the Human Services Division has played in raising awareness of the need to ensure all groups are represented in city services and initiatives. The Division is uniquely positioned to foster interconnectedness and work with partners in the community to break the patterns that have contributed to disparity. The community sees a strong role for the Division to play in finding new ways to work for racial justice and equity and to make sure the people of Tacoma are not excluded from the City’s decision-making process due to racism, homophobia, sexism, language, cultural bias or other forms of cultural dominance.
- **Strong strategic focus:** The City has been highly strategic in the selection of priorities and investing in them and has made measurable progress in each of the four identified focus areas. It has maintained a tight focus on the chosen priorities though out the lifecycle of the plan, while being resilient enough to address emerging or worsening issues, such as commercially sexually exploited youth and the increasing problem of domestic violence.
- **Effective leadership of systems development:** In most areas of focus the City has been highly effective in integrating and aligning programs and initiatives across the human services system as well as leveraging all available assets. Some areas still need a stronger collaborative approach with community partners, the County and the State.

## Recommendations

- **Continue focusing on the four strategic priorities in the current plan.** Both the qualitative and quantitative components of the environmental scan illustrated the continuing demographic, economic, cultural, and social trends and conditions that each of the four current priorities are designed to address: 1) prepare children and youth for success; 2) increase employability, self-determination, and empowerment for adults; 3) meet basic needs of Tacoma residents; and 4) enhance mental health/substance use disorder services.
- **Inject equity in the human services funding application process and in decisions about distribution of resources.** While it was noted that the City has worked to revise its funding policies and that this is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done to ensure the City’s human services contracting process is truly equitable and that funds and services are distributed geographically where they are needed. A companion concern is that the City’s human services funding is opaque to most in the community and that how and where City resources are allocated is not well understood. The City should address the need for

outreach and education about how and what it funds along with continual improvement to its funding policies and process.

- **Develop a more incremental and integrated approach to planning.** The long-range strategic planning process needs to be supplemented with a regular and on-going engagement process for Tacoma residents, along with opportunities to test innovative ideas and take them to scale. The targeted focus areas in the Human Services Strategic Plan need to align and/or integrate with larger systems planning efforts – such as economic development – that address regional issues and trends.
- **Ensure the City’s human services investments are serving the entire community, not just people who know how to navigate the human services system.** Both the community mapping and environmental scan show how cultural, language, and socio-economic diversity in Tacoma and the region isolates some households and parts of the community from access to the opportunities that would help reduce the harmful effects of poverty and social injustice. The City needs to identify and fund creative ways of bridging these gaps in access and services so that all Tacoma residents have the opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency.

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# Tacoma Community Profile: Access to Opportunity

## Tacoma Demographics

The City of Tacoma is a unique, highly diverse and contemporary City of over 200,000 residents, which makes it the second most populated city in the Puget Sound area and the third most populated in the state. As Table 1 shows, 35% of Tacoma residents are multiracial or of a race or ethnicity other than white alone.

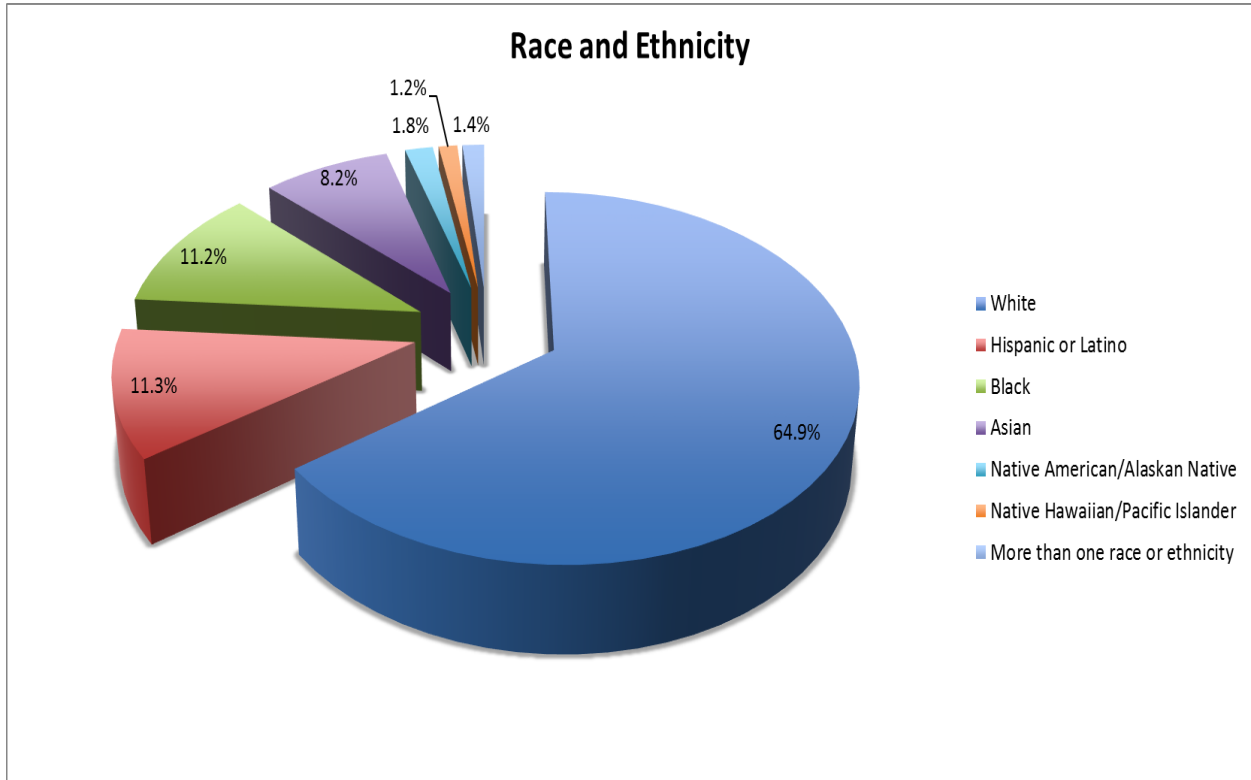


Table 1

A language other than English is spoken in 19% of Tacoma homes, which is the same as the state average, and about 13% of residents were born outside of the U.S.

The majority of Tacoma residents are adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Seniors age 65 and over make up 11% of the population and youth under the age of 18 make up the remaining 23% of the City's population.

## “The City of Destiny”

The character and socio-economic culture of this hard working community are embedded in a rich history of promise and progress. Tacoma is known as the “City of Destiny” because the area was chosen to be the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By connecting the bay with the railroad, Tacoma became Washington’s largest port and a center of international trade.

After suffering a prolonged economic decline caused by suburbanization and divestment, the City rebounded in the 1990’s with developments to the downtown core, the first light rail service in the state, the state’s highest density of art and history museums; and a restored urban waterfront. Today, Tacoma-Pierce County enjoys a reputation as one of the most livable areas in the country, and in 2010 Tacoma was named one of the nation’s 100 Best Communities for Young People by America’s Promise Alliance.

Even with this renewed vibrancy and the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity that is the community’s strength, Tacoma still struggles with long-standing structural barriers and institutional challenges that contribute to and even amplify social injustice and socio-economic disparity.

The “**Opportunity Map**” shown in Figure 1 on the right illustrates that many living in Tacoma do not have fair access to the critical opportunity structures and social infrastructure to succeed in life.

“**Opportunity**” is defined as: a situation or condition that places individuals in a position to be more likely to succeed and excel. High opportunity indicators include, high-performing schools, availability of sustainable employment and living wage jobs, stable neighborhoods, transportation availability and mobility, and a healthy and a safe environment.

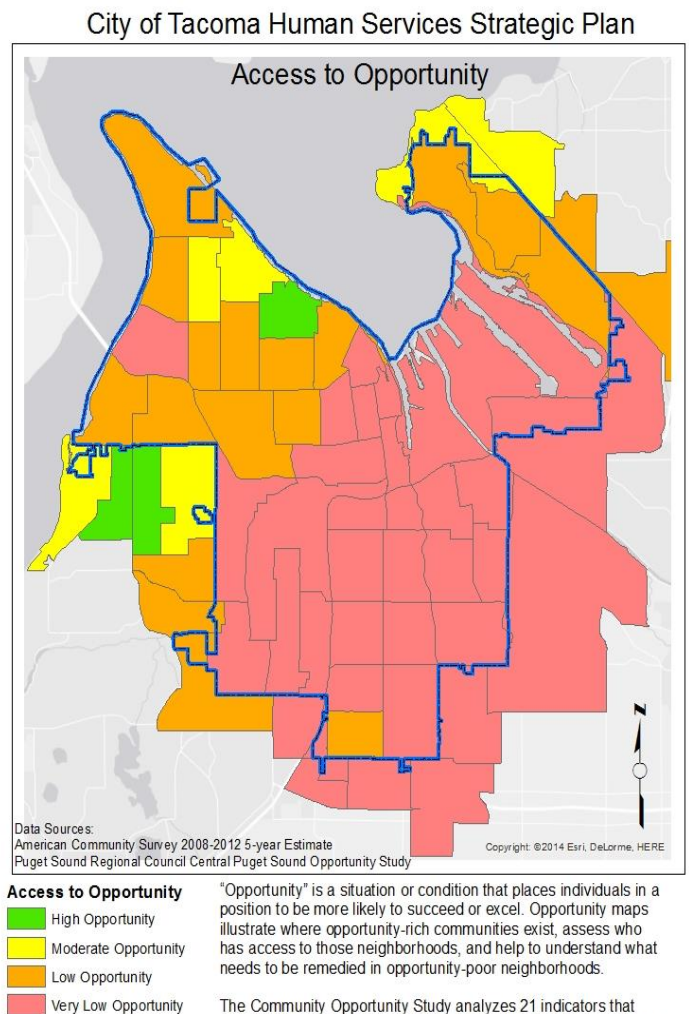


Figure 1



Opportunity maps illustrate whether patterns of segregation by age, class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or language correlate with areas of higher or lower opportunity. For example, Figures 2 and 3 below show that a significant portion of the City's non-White residents and those with language barriers live in areas of very low opportunity.

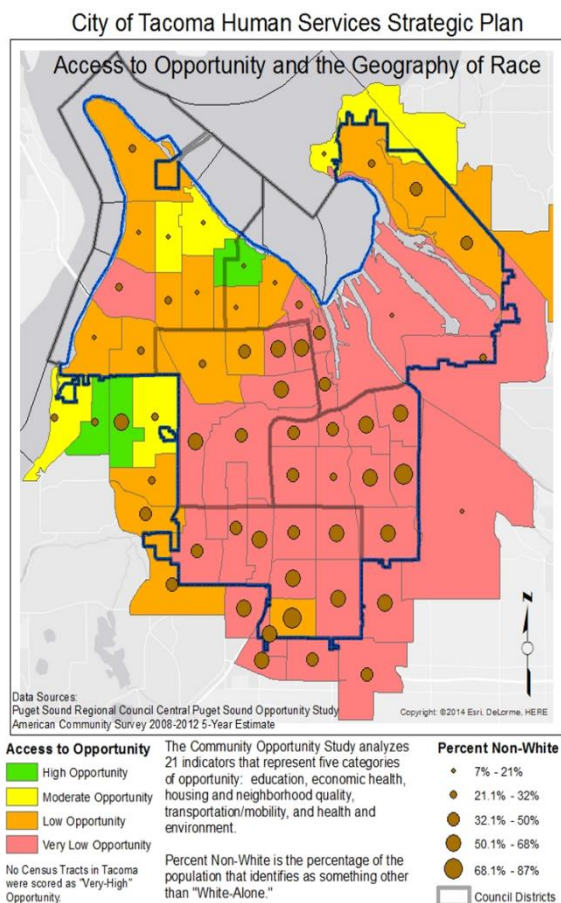


Figure 2

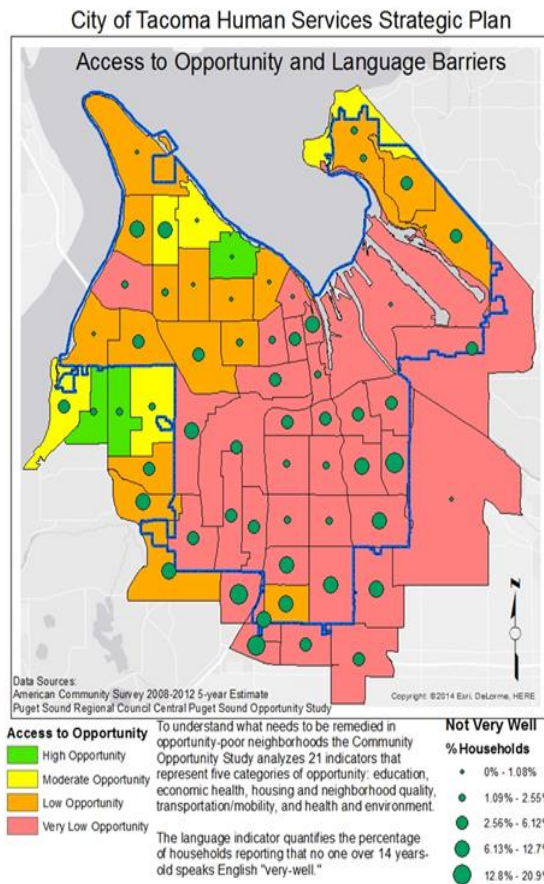


Figure 3

The latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau underscores the effects of low opportunity and how non-White residents are disproportionately impacted. The income gap for racial and ethnic minorities continues to widen. Per Capita income of African Americans is 36% lower than that of white residents and Per Capita income of Latinos is 47% lower. These realities, combined with other trends such as breakdown of traditional systems of family support – parents often working multiple jobs without extended family support for raising children – lack of financial literacy and ability of many to manage their financial lives, inadequate access to transportation, and lack of affordable housing have marginalized people of color and had similar effects on other community members based on their age, sexual orientation, immigration status or disabilities.

## **A Call for Greater Social Equity**

Addressing social inequities, including racial inequities, will require a greater level of commitment to identifying and eliminating the structural conditions that keep inequity in place. It will require more leadership and effort to engage those most impacted by potential changes to “come to the table” and create the future together. All components of the community of Tacoma – its residents, its government, and its social institutions - have a mutual responsibility to solve these problems together and re-ignite the spirit that inspired the motto: “The City of Destiny.”

In today’s globalized reality, we are all interdependent. The value of inter-dependence is that we each have something to offer. The nature and magnitude of the challenge requires people to realize their own well-being depends on the well-being of others and that this is the key to success in building a sustainable reality where social equity is the norm – where all people, regardless of where they live in the community have access to the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and let them reach their full potential. Social equity requires that low-income communities, communities of color and other historically underrepresented populations are active participants in planning and policy making by having the knowledge and other tools required for full participation.

Using the framework of City’s Equity and Empowerment Initiative, which seeks to eliminate the underlying drivers that perpetuate inequity, the City of Tacoma’s Human Services Division will help make social equity a reality for Tacoma’s residents. It will lead by promoting equity access and proximity to community services, building partnerships that engage and empower community groups and stakeholders in advancing access, and demonstrating clear commitment to equity in human services decision-making, activities, and investment.

### **Tacoma’s Human Services Vision**

The vision for the human services system in the City of Tacoma is that all Tacoma residents have access to the opportunities and pathways that will lead them to prosperity. *This vision is achieved through a robust and integrated system of culturally appropriate support services that are equitable, easy to access and navigate, and available in locations where the needs exist.*

### **City of Tacoma Human Services Values and Guiding Principles**

The City’s values serve as guiding principles, and they impact every aspect of the organization, including how services are funded and delivered services. Every decision the City makes will be made through the prism these values.

**Equity and Empowerment** – We promote equity and inclusion throughout the diverse region we serve. We recognize the assets and strengths of the community, our residents, our stakeholders, and our staff and draw upon these resources in a partnership to promote community self-determination. We hold ourselves accountable and periodically examine the impact of our efforts and investments through our own evaluation processes and independently through the eyes of our various stakeholders and interest communities.

**Leadership** – We are a leader in making strategic investments in the community that create opportunity and provide critical services to Tacoma residents. We work with the Pierce county, other municipalities, City departments, community based organizations and residents to provide leadership in the policy, planning, funding and delivery of humans services in Tacoma and throughout the region. We support initiatives that build community leadership and empower members of specific communities to take leadership and ownership of making decisions, identifying problems and developing solutions to community needs and issues.

**Systems alignment and integration** - We lead efforts that create a more seamless approach to addressing human service needs. We enhance and expand the capacity of Tacoma’s human services system by facilitating collaboration, working with regional partners, leveraging funding, linking and integrating services, reducing duplication and measuring the community impacts of what we do. We link human services strategies with economic development, transportation and other regional planning efforts in order to create more opportunity and promote social equity for Tacoma residents.

**Strengths-based support** – We promote self-determination and honor the dignity of the people we serve. We provide innovative support systems that promote resilience, self-sufficiency and help people to take control of their own lives in meaningful and sustainable ways. We invest in supports and services that address trauma and adverse childhood experiences so people can develop and have what they need to thrive and navigate their lives successfully.

**Innovation and Experimentation** – We are creative, open to experimentation and on the look-out for innovative, cutting edge solutions. We are committed to continuous learning and continuous improvement, and we promote and encourage a culture where failures are accepted as part of innovation and as a means to achieving success.

## 2015-2019 Strategic Priorities and Goals

The implementation of the 2010 – 2014 Human Services Strategic Plan resulted in many successful programs and initiatives. In order to build upon these achievements, the Human Services Commission, and a broad community of stakeholders and residents reviewed areas of need to ensure Tacoma continues to be proactive in supporting the well-being of children, youth, adults, and families. The four priority areas selected to be addressed in the 2015-2019 plan are the same as those included in the previous plan:

**Strategic Priority 1:** Prepare Children and Youth for Success

**Strategic Priority 2:** Increase Employability, Self-Determination and Empowerment for Adults

**Strategic Priority 3:** Meet Basic Needs of Tacoma Residents

**Strategic Priority 4:** Enhance Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Services

The following sections describe the community needs and challenges associated with these strategic priorities and the goals the City will pursue to address each of the priorities.

### Strategic Priority 1: Prepare children and youth for success

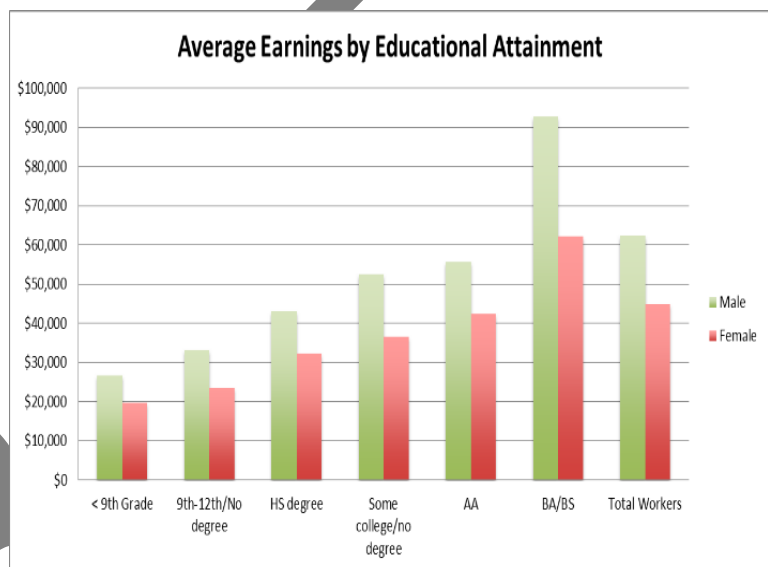
It is well known and documented that investments in quality early childhood learning experiences, after school programs, and other activities that prepare children for school and keep them actively participating in their social, psychological and cognitive development produces adults who are self-sufficient and have the skills and capacity to become the leaders of tomorrow.

During the 2010-2014 plan cycle the City invested 40% of its human services funds to address this priority, including youth development and after school programming. The City also sponsored and participated in initiatives such as First 5 FUNDamentals, Graduate Tacoma!, Curfew, the Truancy Initiative, Tacoma Gang Reduction project, Collaboration to End Sexual Exploitation of Children, the Youth and Young Adult Emergency Drop-In Shelter.

The power of these types of investments in children and youth is best illustrated through actual stories of the children and youth who have benefitted from programs the City of Tacoma funds.

*13-year-old Makayla was introduced to the Eastside Boys and Girls Club at the age of nine. She comes from a single-parent household where she experienced a number of troubles and challenges at home. Makayla is part of the dance program at Boys and Girls Club and developed her skills to a level where she became the leader of her own Hip-Hop dance group. Through her hard work, dedication, and leadership she was accepted to SOTA – School of the Arts in the coming school year. Makayla is a shining example of a young person succeeding despite the odds that were stacked against her.*

In addition to the positive impacts of early child development and youth supports, we also know by looking at the U.S. Census data presented in Table 2 that educational attainment determines earning power. If earning potential weren't a compelling enough reason enough to focus on the educational attainment, statewide occupational trends illuminate an even more urgent problem. By 2018 two-thirds of all jobs in Washington will require a degree or technical certification. By contrast, in 2010:



**Table 2**

- 4 out of 10 Tacoma high school students didn't graduate.
- 34% of third grade students could not read at or above their grade level.
- 62% of eighth grade students did not pass algebra.
- 52% of students entering kindergarten did not meet age-level expectations in six areas.
- 41% of Tacoma Public Schools graduates did not enroll in post-secondary education.

There is some good news: on the whole, graduation and drop-out rates have been improving over time.

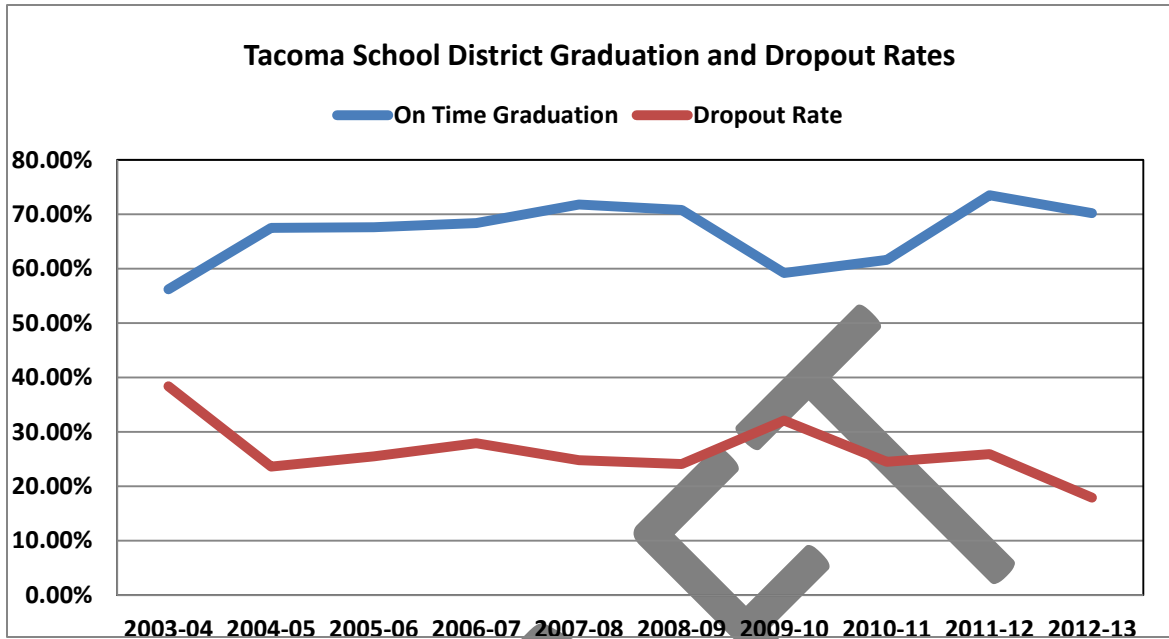


Table 3

Youth involvement in gang activity, one of the biggest risk factors for not completing high school, is also on the decline. Gang-affiliated offenses have dropped by 61% over a five-year period. The number of gang members/associates dropped in the same five-year time period by 41%. The success of Tacoma’s Gang Reduction Project in facilitating the kind of community partnerships that are effective in helping gang-affected youth is reflected in the story of 18-year-old Jason.

*A counselor at Mount Tahoma High School realized Jason was gang-involved and failing in several classes. With his suspension record and lack of credits, Jason was not going to graduate. His counselor reached out to the city’s partners at Northwest Leadership Foundation’s Co-Opp Project and Proteen, and they quickly determined that significant communication issues and cultural barriers stood between Jason’s family and the school. Proteen provided a fluent Samoan speaking staff member to communicate with Jason’s father, building the trust that allowed Jason’s family to support him in following through on the academic and behavioral plan that was developed to help him graduate on time. As a result of intensive mentoring, academic advocacy and relationship building provided by the Project partnership, Jason succeeded in staying out of trouble and expanded his intervention plan to include the goal of getting out of gang life. One June 7, 2013 Jason graduated on time with his class, becoming the first member of his family to earn a high school diploma.*

While Jason’s success points to the positive community impact of investing in gang reduction and prevention efforts, other challenges to youth educational success are increasing.

- The number of students who qualify for a free or reduced cost school lunch has increased by 16% since 2002.

- Homelessness among Tacoma’s youth is also on the rise. Approximately 3,000 unaccompanied youth and young adults experience or are at significant risk of homelessness in Pierce County each year – 1,000 are under the age of 18.

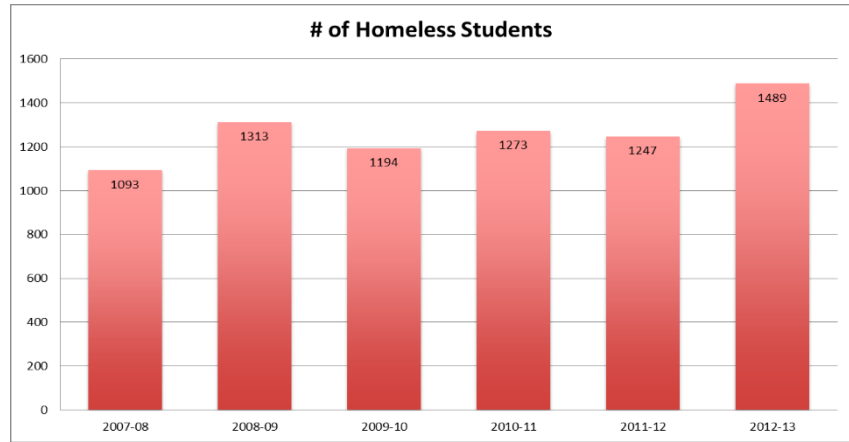


Table 4

- 25% of children in Tacoma under the age of 18 live below the Federal Poverty Level.
- Parts of Tacoma have the highest risk scores for Maternal and Child Health in comparison to 56 other regions in the state.
- Review of community risk factors and data on female runaways and girls age 12-17 who have had contact with the juvenile justice system suggest that Tacoma may have a significant problem with the issue of commercially sexually exploited children.

## 2015 – 2019 Funding Targets and Goals

The City will continue its focus and funding in this strategic priority to ensure children and youth should receive the support they need to be successful in school, and to be prepared for self-sufficiency and success in life.

### Prepare Children and Youth for Success\* (XX% Funding Target)

#### *Children, Youth, and Family Development*

- Parents/caregivers have skills to provide quality environments for children and/or have the skills to recognize, intervene in and reduce the effects of childhood trauma
- Barriers to academic success are reduced so students graduate with competence and confidence
- Unaccompanied youth, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth experiencing homelessness, and children experiencing exploitation have the safety, resources, and skills to meet their needs

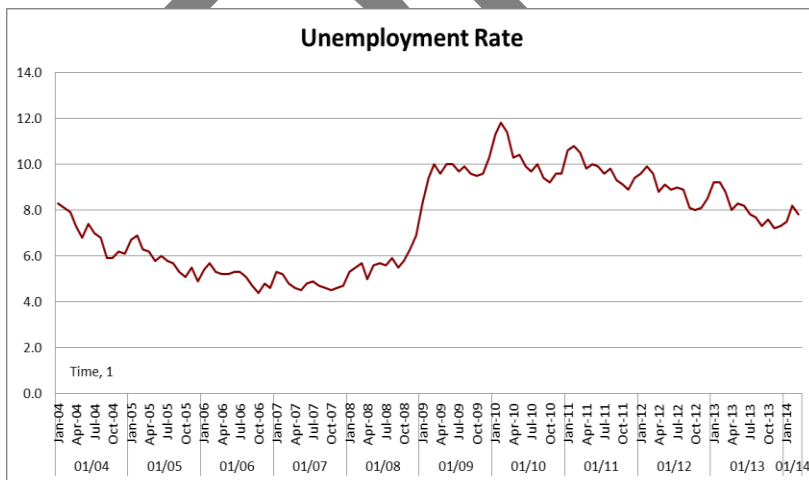
### **Gang Prevention & Intervention**

- Gang prevention, intervention and/or suppression services are available in Tacoma neighborhoods that are disproportionately impacted by gang crime
- Community perceptions about gangs and gang activity are improved

## **Strategic Priority 2: Increase employability, self-determination and empowerment for adults.**

The City of Tacoma has a number of assets to help address this strategic priority. Tacoma is a major business center for the South Sound Region and is home to the largest port in Washington State. The Port of Tacoma and Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) are two traditional anchors of the local economy, with the Port employing over 28,000 workers alone. In the 1980's a stream of new software, biotechnology and Internet companies moving into the area led to an economic revival and the Tacoma-Pierce County area began transitioning out of its wood and paper products manufacturing industries.

Targeted industry clusters in health care/medical services, aerospace manufacturing, clean water technology, cyber security, and international logistics and trade all provide living wage jobs that lead to self-sufficiency. Residents of Tacoma also have access to higher education institutions in the Pierce County and neighboring Thurston and King Counties, including eight four-year universities and colleges, and 15 community and technical colleges.



**Table 5**

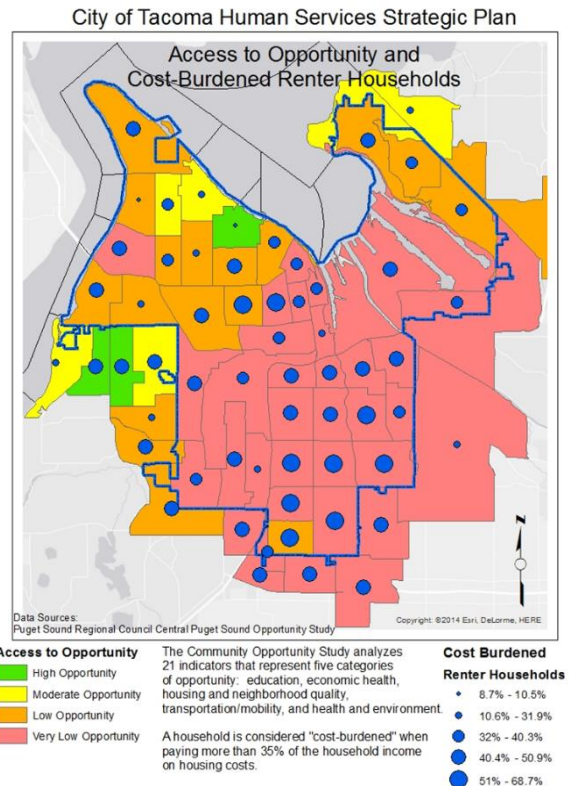
Despite all of these strengths, the county and City continue to struggle to recover from the effects of the Great Recession. The unemployment rate in Pierce County is dropping but has not reached pre-recession levels. The Tacoma-Pierce County area has also been slow to recover jobs lost during the 2008 recession.



The trend in job growth looks positive, but marginal, and more jobs are expected to be created in the service sector, sales, and retail, which are typically lower paying. Income growth has been restrained by sluggish job growth and elevated food and energy prices, and Pierce County has been at or near the top of the list of counties in the state for foreclosure activity.

A number of other factors are creating the need for investment in this strategic priority. Housing is not affordable for many residents in the community. About 50% of Tacoma renter households are paying more than 30% of their income toward housing costs, leaving little to pay for child care, transportation, and health care.

An opportunity map (Figure 4) showing cost-burdened renter households in the City of Tacoma illustrates that largest percentage of households paying more than 35% of their income on housing costs reside in areas of very low economic opportunity. Many of these households are only a paycheck or one medical emergency away from losing their housing. Others rely on family, friends, housing subsidies and other benefits to survive. Child care is expensive and quality care is out of reach for many.



**Figure 4**

Cultural and linguistic barriers are present in many households. 19% of Tacoma residents' speak a language other than English, and bilingual services are not readily available. Many residents have special needs and require assistance with the activities of daily living:

- 13% of Tacoma residents age 15-34 have disabilities that make it difficult to perform daily activities.
- 11% of Tacoma residents are seniors, with this number expected to grow to 18% by 2030.
- 47% of people 65 and older have disabilities.
- Caregivers and surviving partners face many challenges – financial, housing maintenance, food, transportation, health.

During the 2010-2014 plan cycles, the City targeted 10% of its human services funds to this priority, and the investments the City has made in supports for self-sufficiency have produced

*Allen is an 88-year-old Vietnam Veteran with macular degeneration and a number of health issues that require frequent visits to the Veteran's Administration Hospital at American Lake for monitoring and treatment. Edith, a Senior Companion and fellow resident in Allen's apartment building, began working with Allen in October 2013. At first Alan was standoffish and wasn't sure about letting Edith into his personal space. Prior to Edith's involvement, a transportation service would take Allen to the hospital and drop him off. Allen would often get lost. Edith now takes Allen to the Hospital every two weeks for his blood test, shots, and physicians appointments and sometimes accompanies him while he sees the doctor. She helps Allen go grocery shopping and pick out food since he can't see labels. Edith made an appointment for Allen learn about all of the great tools and resources that are available for people with impaired vision. She also helped Allen get hearing aides and taught him how to order them on line with his special computer for the blind.*

positive outcomes.

## **2015 – 2019 Funding Targets and Goals**

Adults should be able to easily access and use education, training, jobs and/or positive community connections. That capacity may be the product of training, education, better access to employment, job creation, or any number of factors that result in living wage jobs for individuals and families.

The City will continue its commitment to ensuring that access and supports are available to allow residents to enter or progress in the job market, or when appropriate, to have other positive and meaningful involvement in the community.

**Increase Employability, Self-determination, and Empowerment for Adults\*\*** (XX% Funding Target)

### ***Workforce Development***

- Education, training, and individualized employment support services are available that enable all residents, especially historically marginalized populations, to enter and/or progress in the job market.

### ***Self-determination & Empowerment***

- Opportunities for individuals to build upon their strengths are available so that they can live as independently as possible and have [options](#) for positive and meaningful involvement in the community.

## Strategic Priority 3: Meet basic needs of Tacoma residents

The City of Tacoma provided and directly sponsored a number of programs and services to support families and individuals in need. During the 2010-2014 strategic plan cycle, the City invested 50% of its human services funds in areas housing stabilization, access to basic services, systems development work in the area of domestic and intimate partner violence. While progress has been made in a number of areas, community data and input pointed to the continued importance of this strategic priority.

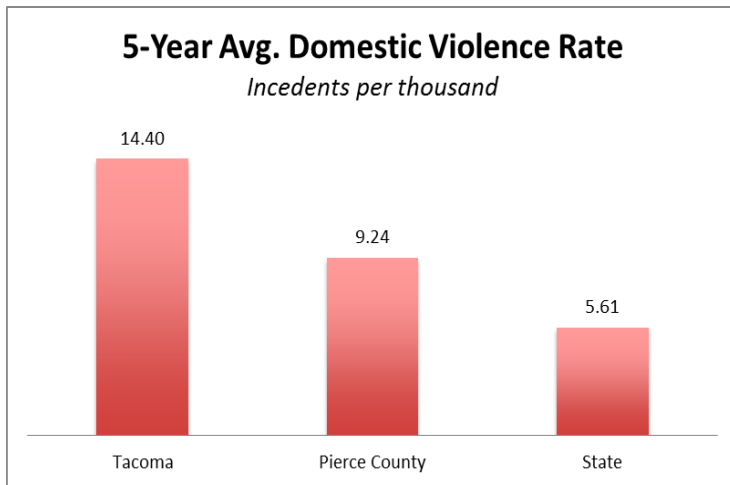
The City made significant strides in addressing the issue of homelessness. The number of people experiencing Homelessness in Tacoma has declined dramatically in the last three years.

- Pierce County's Annual Homeless Point in Time count showed a decrease from 2,068 individuals in 2011 to 1,474 individuals in 2014.
- The number of unsheltered chronic homeless has shown a decrease since 2011 from 145 individuals to 123 individuals in 2014.
- The number of homeless encampments has dropped from 175 in 2013 to 86 in 2014.

While some residents still experienced waiting lists to receive the emergency shelter services and housing support they needed, there were many success stories of individuals and families who benefitted from rapid re-housing approaches and were quickly transitioned into permanent housing through housing services and rent subsidies, case management, and individualized employment assistance. Tessa and her children are one of the success stories.

*Tessa and her three daughters, ages 7, 4 and 1 were living in her car. She had a long and frustrating wait after assessment at AP4H. After months of waiting for a solution, Tessa first received a call about transitional housing that she was excited about. Due to an error, she and her daughters were instead offered shelter at Phoenix Housing Network (PHN). Tessa had never experienced homelessness before, and she was afraid of a shelter. PHN was her only option, so she and her daughters left living in the car behind them. After a little time, Tessa found that all she had feared about shelter living was not true – she even rated her experience at PHN 10 on a scale of 1-10. During her three-month stay at the shelter, Tessa was placed in the Rapid Re-Housing program and she and her daughters will soon be moving to a beautiful new apartment near Wright Park.*

In contrast to the successes in addressing homelessness, trends in other areas related to the basic health and well-being of Tacoma residents are alarming. Total visits to food banks/meal sites by residents of Tacoma increased by 69% from 2008 to 2013. During the 2012-2013 school year, 63% of students in Tacoma Public Schools were receiving free or reduced rate lunches and 21% were receiving free or reduced rate breakfasts. Eligibility numbers are likely higher as students in the upper grades drop their enrollment in this program because of stigma.



Tacoma has the highest rate of domestic violence of any community in the state - almost three times that of the overall state rate. Tacoma area providers have reported that 15% of their domestic violence clients are less than 19 years old and 31% are between 18 and 25 years old. They also report that more than half of their clients are undocumented or have Limited English Proficiency.

**Table 6**

## 2015-2019 Funding Targets and Goals

Every Tacoma resident should have access to food, clothing, shelter and other basic needs. Some needs are urgent- like violence and hunger.

### Meet the Basic Needs of Tacoma Residents (XX% Funding Target)

#### **Housing Stabilization**

- Prevention of and pathways out of homelessness are available which connect individuals and families with housing and/or supportive services tailored to their unique needs.

#### **Food Security**

- Residents have access to healthy food and optimal nutrition year-round.

#### **Safety**

- Interpersonal and intimate violence/abuse is reduced.

## Strategic Priority 4: Enhance Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Services

Mental health and substance use disorders are common. National estimates are that one in four people have met the diagnostic criteria for a behavioral health problem in the last year and more than 50% meet the criteria at some point in their lifetime. Washington has one of the highest rates of mental illness in the country.

According to the 2011 and 2012 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, almost 21 percent of adults 18 and older living in the state have some form of mental illness – making Washington

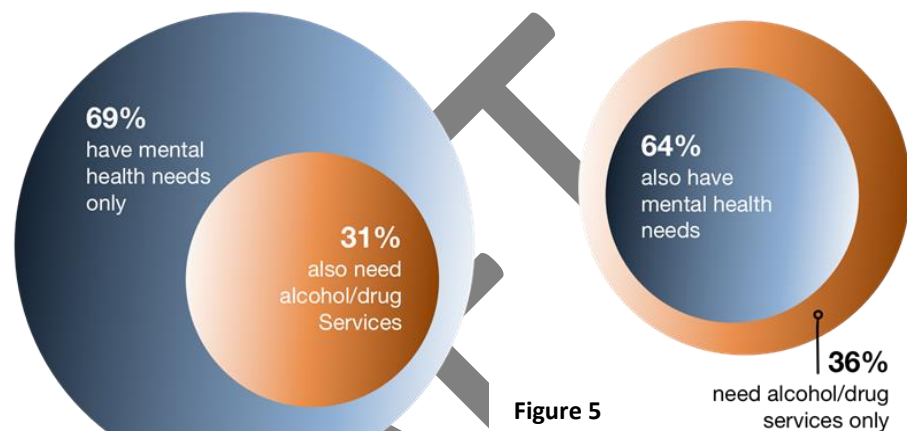
the fifth highest ranking state in the nation. Nearly half of the adults receiving service through the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) have mental health needs.

Some populations in Tacoma are at high risk of having mental health and/or substance use issues and not having access to treatment services, including:

- individuals experiencing homelessness
- active duty military and veterans
- youth
- African Americans

Some populations are especially vulnerable. More than half of the children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems have some type of reported mental health issue. Young adults in Tacoma ages 18-24 are least likely to have health insurance compared to other age groups, which means they may not seek and obtain the treatment they need.

Behavioral health problems and homelessness are intertwined. For example, compared to DSHS clients overall, children and adults experiencing homelessness were more likely to have a mental health disorder - a 50% increase for youth and a 23% increase for adults. This population is also three times as likely to have a substance use disorder. National studies show



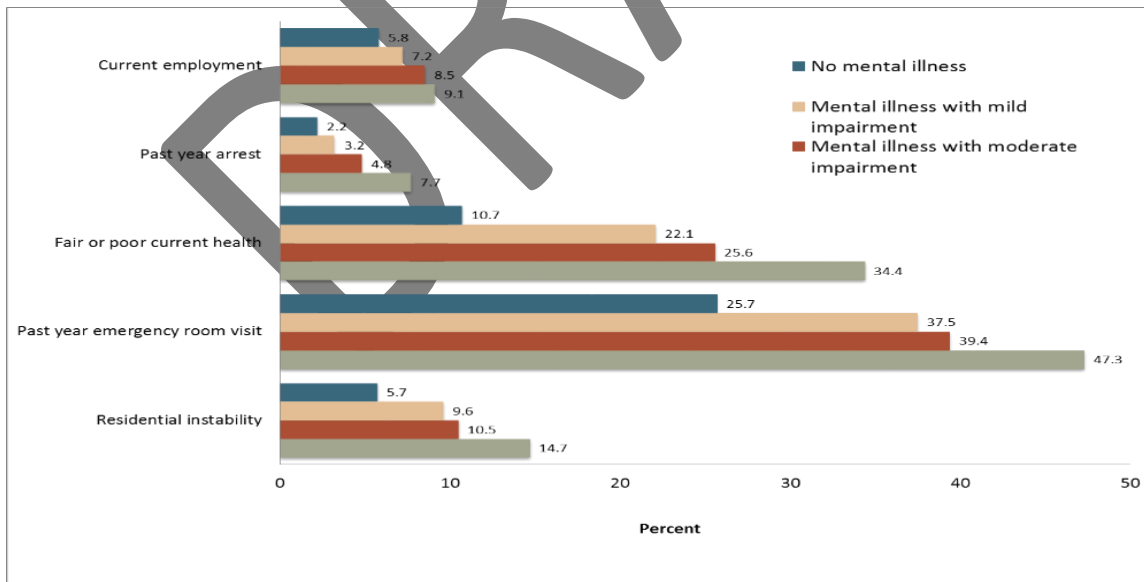
that LGBTQ groups are two and a half times more likely to have a mental health disorder. A 2011 snapshot of individuals experiencing homelessness in Pierce County showed that of those individuals reported unsheltered or experiencing chronic homelessness:

- 52% had mental health issues
- 30% had drug and alcohol problems
- 24% had co-occurring problems

National data indicate that 38% of soldiers report psychological symptoms and among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. In a 2011 Pierce County homeless report, 40% of Pierce County residents experiencing homelessness were military veterans. 27% of Pierce County individuals experiencing homelessness are African American. This population is also at risk for mental illness due to:

- overrepresentation in the homeless population
- an increased rate for incarceration
- higher unemployment
- a higher percentage in the foster care and child welfare systems, and
- victims of serious violent crime.

Untreated behavioral health issues are costly and life threatening. The mortality rate is double for those with mental illness, and people with mental illness die earlier than the general population. The rate of suicides in Washington has increased by 11 % over the past 10 years.



**Table 7**

As the Table 7 illustrates, people with mental illness also have more serious impairments in a variety of areas of daily functioning, which creates multiple needs and requires them to be in multiple systems in order to receive the necessary treatment and services.

Having a behavioral health problem also increases the risk of unemployment. Of all adults with mental health and substance use disorders served by the DSHS and the Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) only 21.7% had employment. The rate of unemployment for this population is much higher in Washington than is the case nationally.

Drug and alcohol problems are more prevalent in Tacoma than other areas of the state. In the last nine years heavy drinking among Tacoma adults remained relatively unchanged and binge drinking ranged from 13-17%. Data collected in 2010 by Washington DSHS Research and Analysis Division showed that nearly 30% of Tacoma 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported alcohol use and almost one in four reported illegal drug use.

	Tacoma	Pierce	WA State
Clients of state-funded alcohol or drug services (age 18+) per 1,000 adults	21.25	11.22	13.43
Clients of state-funded alcohol or drug services (age 10-17) per 1,000 adolescents	12.89	8.51	11.1
Arrests (age 18+) alcohol-related per 1,000 adults	5.73	4.87	9.31
Arrests (age 18+) drug law violation per 1,000 adults	5.3	3.77	4.39
Total arrests of adolescents (age 10-17) per 1,000 adolescents	46.2	31.8	39.35
Arrests (age 10-17) drug law violation per 1,000 adolescents	5.73	4.02	4.77

**Table 8**

In April 2012 The City enacted a 0.1% Mental Health Sales Tax solely for the purpose of providing for the operation or delivery of chemical dependency and mental health treatment programs and services and for the operation or delivery of therapeutic court programs and services. The City Council aligned the funding to five policy goals: 1) reduction in the number of mentally ill and chemically dependent youth and adults using costly interventions; 2) reduction in incidence and severity of chemical dependency and mental and emotional disorders in youth and adults; 3) reduction in youth and adults experiencing homelessness; 4) services integration; and 5) linkages with other council directed efforts.

While it is too soon to evaluate the impacts of these investments, but early anecdotal data and success stories suggest that the City’s initiatives are beginning to produce results.

*Ten years ago 50-year old Michael lost his son in a gang-related shooting. The anguish of his loss caused a downward spiral of despair that ended in a heroin addiction. Michael spent 10 years on the streets of Tacoma, most of the time homeless and suffering from worsening set of medical problems caused by his substance use and lack of access to adequate medical care and treatment. After falling into a diabetic coma and nearly dying, Michael knew he needed to change, so he made the commitment: if he could get help, he would quit heroin, stay clean, and turn his life around. He was referred to the New Beginnings program where he was given a place to stay and connected to a full range of wrap-around services through a coordinated system of providers. Today Michael is clean and sober, his diabetes is well managed and he is applying to social security to receive assistance with his living expenses and medical issues. Michael says he is certain without New Beginnings, he would have given up, started using again, stayed on the street and eventually died.*

**2015-2019 Funding Targets and Goals: (Note: Currently under review, likely to change.)**

**Strategic Priority 4: Enhance Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Services**

**Allocation Methodology for .1% Mental Health Sales Tax Revenue**

- 50% Human Services Competitive Process
- 10% Direct Funding (Non-Competitive)
- 40% Strategic RFP

**50% Human Services Competitive Process**

**Community Based Care**

- Increase access to mental health and/or chemical dependency for uninsured and/or underinsured youth and adults
- Enhance services to current housing providers serving people with mental illness and chemical dependency needs



***Programs Targeted to Help Youth \****

- Expand prevention and early intervention for youth
- Strengthen family support services for adults and youth struggling with mental health and/or chemical dependency

***Jail and Hospital Diversion***

- Expand programs that reach out to and engage individuals leaving hospitals, jails or crisis facilities
- Increase housing inventory for programs serving individual with mental health and/or chemical dependency needs

**10% Direct Funding**

***Jail and Hospital Diversion***

- Support Crisis Intervention Systems

**40% Strategic RFP**

***Improve MHCD System Coordination***

- Integrated/Centralized services for MHCD
- Enhance Community Connection to Resources

***Programs Targeted to Help Youth \****

- Supportive Services for Homeless Youth

\*Ages 0-24 years

\*\*Ages 16+ years

# ROLES OF THE CITY

The City fills a number of important roles and is engaged in a number of strategies to address the needs identified in this plan. Funding is a critical component, but the City also exercises leadership and promotes systems development, which can increase the capacity of others to achieve the goals of the City and the community. In addition, the City provides some services directly to Tacoma residents.

Participants in focus groups, and those interviewed for this plan and conversations with the Human Services Commission and Community Review Panel were helpful in reaffirming what the roles will look like, and what they could accomplish if carried out successfully. The City has four broad roles in providing and improving human services and increasing capacity of the human services system for Tacoma residents: leadership, systems development, direct service provision and funding. In each of these, the City will recognize and build on assets and strengths of the community and individual residents.

## Leadership

- Lead partnerships to:
  - Develop comprehensive responses to big problems.
  - Increase availability of resources (monetary and nonmonetary).
  - Increase community capacity to respond.
  - Publicize positive impact of human services.
  - Set expectations and demonstrate cultural competency.
  - Advocate for equity, justice, and human rights.
  - Engage stakeholders in designing services.

## Systems Development

- Work with regional partners to:
  - Increase service effectiveness and impact.
  - Facilitate collaboration (break down silos).
  - Leverage funding to increase effect.
  - Consider both system and program outcomes.
  - Seek independent and unified assessment of program impacts and outcomes

## Direct Service Provision

- Increase access to quality services.
- Increase parent/caregiver capacity.

## Funding of Services

- Provide technical assistance to increase organizational capacity.
- Increase cultural competency in human services organizations.
- Provide funding to services providers.
- Invest in innovative approaches
- Promote equitable access to grant opportunities

### CITY OF TACOMA ROLES IN HUMAN SERVICES 2015-2019

PRIORITIES AND GOALS	Leadership	Systems Development	Direct Service Provision	Funding
PREPARE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOR SUCCESS	✓	✓		✓
➤ Parents/caregivers have skills to provide quality environment for children and/or have the skills to recognize, intervene in and reduce the effects of childhood trauma	✓			✓
➤ Barriers to academic success are reduced so students graduate with competence and confidence	✓			✓
➤ Unaccompanied youth, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth experiencing homelessness, and children experiencing exploitation have the safety, resources, and skills to meet their needs	✓	✓		✓
➤ Gang prevention, intervention and/or suppression services are available in Tacoma neighborhoods that are disproportionately impacted by gang crime	✓	✓		✓
➤ Community perceptions about gangs and gang activity are improved	✓	✓		✓

INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND EMPOWERMENT FOR ADULTS	✓	✓		✓
➤ Education, training, and individualized employment support services are available that enable all residents, especially historically marginalized populations, to enter and/or progress in the job market.	✓	✓		✓
➤ Opportunities for individuals to build upon their strengths are available so that they can live as independently as possible and have options for positive and meaningful involvement in the community.				✓
MEET BASIC NEEDS OF TACOMA RESIDENTS	✓	✓	✓	✓
➤ Prevention of and pathways out of homelessness are available which connect individuals and families with housing and/or supportive services tailored to their unique needs.	✓	✓		✓
➤ Residents have access to healthy food and optimal nutrition year-round.				✓
➤ Interpersonal and intimate violence/abuse is reduced.	✓	✓	✓	✓
ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES				
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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A** – List of environmental scan participants

**Appendix B** – Human Services Commission and Community Review Panel Roster

**Appendix C** – Detailed Description of Planning Process (include link to Environmental Scan PowerPoint)

**Appendix D** – List of Data Sources

**Appendix E** - List and Description of City Programs and Services (from website)

**Appendix F** – Funding Policies

**Appendix G** – Description of Outcomes Based Evaluation

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