



Kitsap County Department of Human Services
Housing and Homelessness Division
HEART Program
2025 Year End Review

HEART Team Overview: A Year of Proactive Community Care and Resolution

Kitsap County HEART (Homeless Encampment Action Response and Transitions) Team. This year has been a demonstration of consistently coordinated compassion. Through providing a person-centered approach by focusing on connecting individuals with resources and services, many individuals, families, and pets were assisted in transitioning from unauthorized encampments to shelter. The HEART outreach team consistently utilized and connected other service providers in and out of the county that provide outreach, healthcare, treatment, emergency and protective services, transportation, food, shelter, and much coordination of human needs. This document is a summary of some of the program's responses through the end of 2025.

Our Mission: More Than a Response

The heart of our mission is in our name. Our goal throughout 2025 has remained steadfast: to lead with compassion while addressing community concerns, ensuring that our response is clear, consistent, coordinated, and person-centered.

Building Relationships, One Name at a Time

- **Proximity:** We meet people where they are—whether we are swiftly responding to a reported site, proactively visiting county parcels, parks, and right of ways, as well as endeavoring to remain available for someone holding a “help” sign. Reaching out immediately is key. This can mitigate hardship, and connect individuals and households to shelter and services swiftly.
- **Relationships:** Our work starts with a conversation. We build with each individual over time; knowing the clients by name, understanding their unique barriers, and developing the rapport necessary to establish starting points or continue ongoing pathways towards stability.
- **Bridging:** We see ourselves as support in navigating connections for unhoused individuals. Whether we are helping someone engage the Housing Solutions Center (HSC) or providing a warm hand-off to partners like the R.E.A.L. team or Kitsap Mental Health, we are a steady presence helping people connect to resources, support, services, shelter, and much more.

Unpredictable Days, Unwavering Commitment

The Pacific Northwest weather is often unforgiving, but the HEART team doesn't stay inside. Throughout the entire year, our outreach staff remained on the ground, in the woods, down embankments, across ravines, through mud, rain, and wind. We understand that the "unpredictable" is a daily reality for those living unsheltered. Because their need doesn't pause for the weather, neither do we.

Community Safety

We carry a dual responsibility that we do not take lightly: the health and safety of those living in encampments, and the safety and well-being of the Kitsap community at large. It means cleaner parks and safer rights-of-way, but it also means ensuring that the most vulnerable among us aren't left to figure things out alone. By connecting individuals to resources and support, we help them gain stability, laying foundations for reaching their goals and destinations.

2025 highlights

In 2025, HEART investigated, reached out, and completed **436 encampment reports** submitted by residents via the **SeeClickFix community reporting tool** (SCF). This demonstrates a proactive community working in tandem with the county HEART team to maintain the safety of our parks, trails, county parcels, and public rights-of-way while ensuring unhoused individuals are met by a dedicated HEART team that helps create a clear path toward stability.

Across all communications, HEART responded to approximately 750 location reports sent to our team, and thousands of proactive site searches and follow-ups.

SCF Category	North	Central	South	Kitsap Total
Homeless Encampments – Parks	6	53	10	69
Homeless Encampment	26	288	40	354
Homeless Encampment – Private Property	1	10	2	13
Total	33	351	52	436

2025 Homeless encampments reported through Kitsap1 SeeClick Fix

January		February		March	
Homeless encampments	43	Homeless Encampment	31	Homeless Encampment	44
Homeless encampments - parks	9	Homeless Encampment - Parks	3	Homeless Encampment - Parks	4
		Homeless Encampment - Private property	1	Homeless Encampment - Private property	1
April		May		June	
Homeless Encampment	32	Homeless Encampment	35	Homeless Encampment	20
Homeless Encampment - Parks	8	Homeless Encampment - Parks	6	Homeless Encampment - Parks	3
		Homeless Encampment - Private property	3	Homeless Encampment - Private property	3
July		August		September	
Homeless Encampment	50	Homeless Encampment	47	Homeless Encampment	41
Homeless Encampment - Parks	7	Homeless Encampment - Parks	4	Homeless Encampment - Parks	11
Homeless Encampment - Private property	2	Homeless Encampment - Private property	3		
October		November		December	
Homeless encampments	28	Homeless encampments	38	Homeless encampments	26
Homeless encampments - parks	8	Homeless encampments - parks	4	Homeless encampments - parks	2

*private property reports were no longer routed to HEART through SCF as of August

A Coordinated Approach to Community Care

The HEART model provides a consistent and compassionate response to the often-complex dynamics of street-level homelessness. When a citizen files a report, it initiates a precise, professional strategy:

- **Immediate Field Evaluation:** Reports go directly to the HEART Coordinator to be investigated for safety, environmental impact, and the specific needs of those on-site.
- **Direct Engagement & Discovery:** We prioritize a person-centered approach to understand unique barriers, such as economic displacement or mental health challenges.
- **Strategic Coordination:** We bridge the gap between initial discovery and long-term resolution. By orchestrating responsible information sharing with outreach teams, we ensure efficiency while protecting the identities of the families and individuals we serve. We have swiftly built or grew relationships leading to expedited outcomes for all individuals engaged.

2025 Impact by the Numbers

Our mission is to empower individuals to make positive, life-changing decisions through trust and continuous contact. The following are some of the program responses:

- **436** Sites referred to HEART by the community using SeeClickFix
- **4,550** approximate site visits by HEART team. Many of these are proactive revisits to existing or frequently inhabited locations:
 - **850** site visits by Kitsap Community Resources HEART outreach
 - **1,300** site visits by HEART coordinator
 - **2,400** site visits by HEART team Community Relations Officers

- **155** Shelter Applications completed.
- **148** Additional Shelter Referrals provided.
- **184** Referrals to Essential Services and partner organizations.
- **729** mental health & substance use disorder services were provided to shelter guests at Kitsap Rescue Mission (KRM). 23,500 healthy & nutritious meals were provided at KRM.
- **52** households with Pets referred to services through the Kitsap Animal Rescue and Education (KARES) team for pet sheltering. 44 dogs, 16 cats, 1 bearded dragon.
 - Vaccine clinics at the Salvation Army were provided to 40 households. 36 dogs, 14 cats.
- **75** people were connected with the R.E.A.L team for mental health and substance use resources.
- **20** people were connected to emergency medical services.
- **20** individuals entered into treatment programs either through direct placement at Kitsap Recovery Center or through partner referrals such as the REAL.
- **60** individuals were referred to Kitsap Mental Health's Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT).
- **2** individuals were referred to Adult Protective Services.
- **1** individual referred to Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- Coordinated entry specialists actively engaging in crisis intervention outreach.
- Countless phone calls, texts, emails, and communication with the community, partnering organizations, and internal departments coordinating the process to outcome.

Measurable Site Restoration

2025 Kitsap County Public Works – Clean Kitsap Program completed

- **66** cleanup tasks related to encampments
- approximately **150** labor hours.
- **12,580 pounds** of abandoned camp related debris cleanup

Year-over-year:

2024 Kitsap County Public Works - Clean Kitsap Program completed

- **97** cleanup tasks related to encampments
- approximately **315** labor hours.
- **31,550 pounds** of abandoned camp related debris cleanup

2025 Kitsap County Parks – Hours of cleanup

- **30**: South Kitsap Regional Park
- **36**: Old Mill Park
- **132**: Erlands Point Reserve
- **305**: Illahee Nature Preserve
- **503** hours total estimate
- **Parks volunteers dedicated dozens of hours** cleaning abandoned campsites on park property.

Sponsor-a-can

- **447** abandoned shopping carts collected in **2025**
- 944 abandoned shopping carts collected in **2024**

Transforming Reports into Results

The closure of these 436 reports signifies 436 opportunities where the community alerted Kitsap1 and the HEART team to individuals who were met with resources and consistent compassion. The HEART team focuses on building a foundation of trust to address immediate needs such as shelter, resources, and facilitating swift next steps. Once that trust is established, we refer individuals to a specialized **continuum of care** where partner organizations manage subsequent steps.

The amount of completion of programs, successful shelter completion, transition from treatment to beyond, and who continues forward to permanent housing, jobs, or other life categories is impossible to measure. But each individual that the HEART team meets and build bridges with is carried forward to and all the way through to collaborative partners and organizations that get individuals connected to:

- **Housing & Stability:** Transitions into emergency shelter, permanent apartments, and **safe parking locations**.
- **Administrative & Legal Support:** Assistance in obtaining IDs, recovering driver's licenses, and qualifying for social programs.
- **Family Reunification:** Facilitating connections back to family or supportive personal networks.
- **Health & Wellness:** Direct links to integrated treatment, mental health services, and vocational support.

Beyond the Public Eye

The scope of HEART extends further than community-driven reports. In 2025, HEART team:

- **Proactively Discovered** and assisted individuals in parks, trails, and public locations before the community was even aware an encampment existed.
- **Resolved Internal Reports** on county parcels that are not publicly accessible, maintaining this space efficiently and safely for work to continue on the parcel.
- **Extended Outreach** to countless individuals on private property when routed to us by concerned property owners or law enforcement partners.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward 2026, we see new pathways opening—from the new shelter at the Pacific Building to the strengthening of our local partnerships. We are pleased to perform this vital work for our county residents, we remain dedicated to the program goals, and those we serve.

Due to increased coordination speed, we have been able to reach more people, more often, and even achieved a turning point where we can often respond to reports the very day they are received. This proactivity allows us to reach people on the very verge of homelessness—stabilizing situations before they reach a point of crisis.

We thank our **Residents** for their vigilance, the **Board of County Commissioners** for their leadership, and our **Inter-Departmental Partners** for being incredible colleagues who are dedicated to their roles.

Follow-up from those we have helped

We often receive calls and messages from those we reach out to living homeless. Some of that communication from those who successfully transitioned to shelter and other supportive services and programs:

“Thank you for not giving up on me” - individual with pet in shelter after years of homelessness.

“The HEART team saved my life” - an individual that entered treatment and graduated successfully after years of substance use and homelessness.

“I have a full time job and I got my daughter back” - Individual formerly living in their van.

“The Pacific Building is not bad. Now I want others I was living homeless with to get in here and off the streets” - Individual that had been homeless for 20 years and now in shelter.

“Thank you for finding me. I was lost in life” - Individual in the middle of the woods desperate for help and now thriving.

Technical Notes & Definitions

- **Uncounted Support:** In addition to the information above, the team provided uncounted referrals to domestic violence services, protective services, and out-of-county living arrangements.
- **Closed Reports:** A report is closed only after 1. It has been submitted through SeeClickFix, then thoroughly addressed including; received, investigated, personally responded to by the HEART team or partnering organizations and departments with continuous visits leading up to a resolution and site restoration, 2. Most reports are closed or routed to other jurisdictions if not in HEART team county jurisdiction, 3. Private property reports to HEART are closed after outreach is offered. Other departments are often made aware of the location.
- **Vehicles and RVs:** Many of these reports were vehicles or RVs where individuals have now transitioned to a more suitable location to park.
- **Continuous and progressive outreach:** If no one was found at an active camp, visits to the location were continuous and persistent until someone was discovered or the camp was determined to be abandoned after many unsuccessful visits.
- **Abandoned Sites:** Reports are closed when there is no active camp upon investigation, or camps were discovered abandoned with no dwelling. The report will be closed when it is cleaned if on a county parcel.
- **Duplicates:** Some reports included in the count are duplicates from multiple citizens concerning the same site; only one report per site is kept open until resolved. Duplicates are closed.

Together, we are making a lasting impact—one report, one conversation, and one person at a time

Examples of some of the HEART outreach in 2025:



Clear Creek Trail, Silverdale



Clear Creek Trail, Silverdale



Clear Creek Trail, Silverdale

Through intensive, trauma-informed support, our team walked alongside this individual as she navigated profound emotional and substance-use challenges. This enduring partnership led to a historic milestone: after more than a decade of chronic homelessness, she accepted her very first transition into a stable sheltered environment

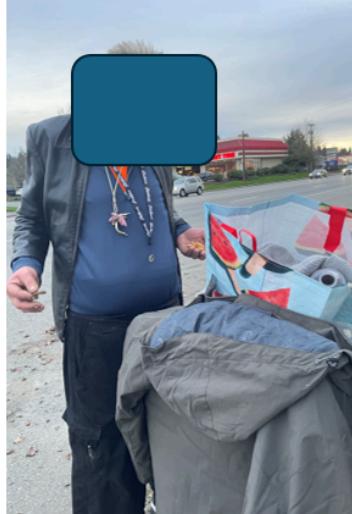


Illahee Nature Preserve, Bremerton



Illahee Nature Preserve, Bremerton

- The individual was reported to outreach staff by the Sponsor-a-Can program.
- Individual was laying on the roadside of Illahee Nature Preserve in the rain. He was cold and hungry.
- Across two visits, outreach successfully built rapport, and the individual became receptive to conversation. He agreed to accept resource coordination, medical evaluation, and shelter placement.
- He was transported to St. Michael Medical Center for evaluation and subsequently provided a shelter bed at a new location that had been secured and held for him.



Street corners, Bremerton

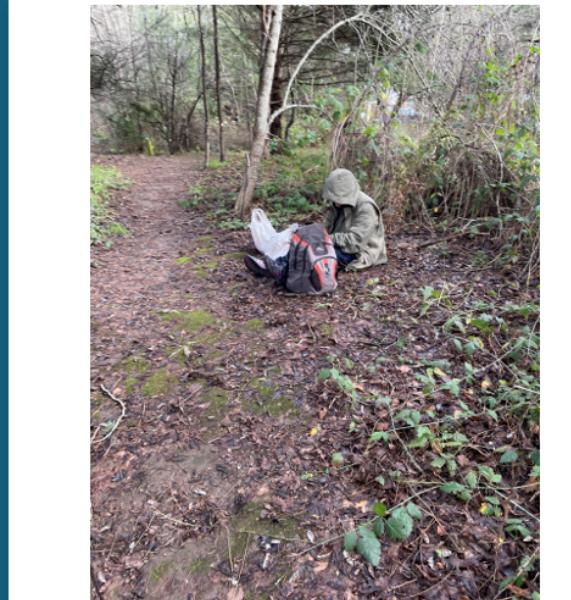
Proactive engagement is a cornerstone of our outreach strategy, particularly when encountering individuals soliciting assistance at intersections or those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

By meeting individuals where they are, our staff initiates rapport-based dialogues as a critical gateway to service navigation and situational assessment. We work to identify specific barriers to stability in a non-confrontational manner, collaboratively navigating resources that facilitate a transition toward stable housing.

Success in these high-stakes interactions requires a balance of clinical vigilance and empathetic communication—using an acute awareness of conversational cues to advocate for change without compromising the trust or dignity of the individual.

Clear Creek, Silverdale

Recognizing that the transition to sheltered living is rarely linear, we maintain a proactive posture toward shelter re-entry. In one notable case, we discovered an individual in the community on three separate occasions and successfully navigated her return to the shelter. By meeting the 72-hour deadline each time, we preserved her placement and prevented the trauma of administrative discharge and a return to chronic homelessness.



Arness Park, Kingston

- After an initial visit to this site, it was determined that the occupant was not present. Our team left a comprehensive resource packet and contact information within the dwelling to ensure the individual was aware of available support.
- A subsequent follow-up revealed that the occupant had voluntarily vacated the area and successfully cleaned the site of all personal property.
- It is common for individuals in these circumstances to contact us later to pursue the resources offered. However, instances where a site is cleared and not re-established often suggest that the occupant may have been experiencing a brief period of housing instability or a temporary transition. In such cases, individuals frequently return to existing housing arrangements or relocate outside of the HEART jurisdiction once their immediate circumstances are resolved.



County Right of Way, Bremerton

- Months of persistent effort have resulted in a successful placement at Pendleton Place. The resident is thriving, a stark contrast to the health crisis he faced earlier this year. He has officially authorized the disposal of his former camper, noting that he no longer views it as a place of security, but as a barrier to his progress. We are pleased to report his continued health and stability



Silverdale, multiple locations

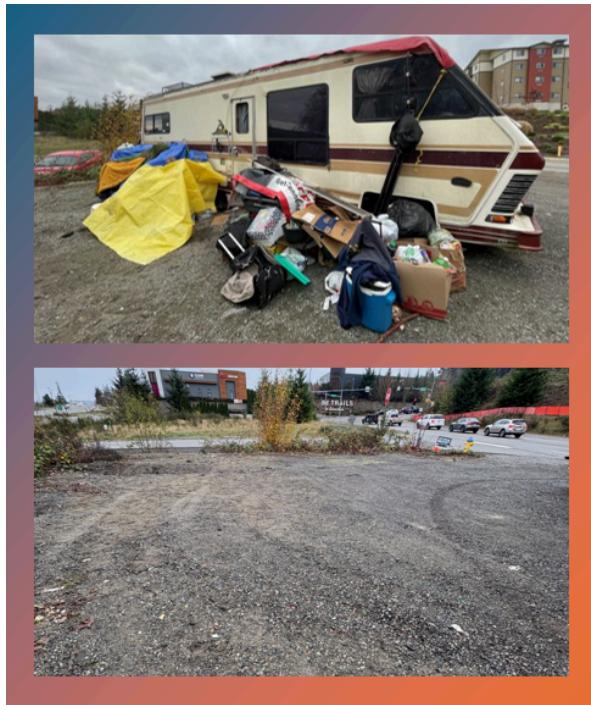
Now in shelter. Before entering, he received the medical help needed for infections on feet and legs. He is now healed and happily continuing progress on various life categories.

- Months of continuous outreach efforts to navigate barriers and offer support through challenging circumstances. Building a relationship along the way to understand his unique perspectives and help him transition off the streets and into shelter and services.



Clear Creek Trail, Silverdale

- Now in Shelter: Following numerous outreach conversations and sustained engagement over the course of a year in central Silverdale, she ultimately submitted applications for shelter.
- She was successfully provided a bed and case management at the Pacific Building.
- With the positive rapport and trust maintained throughout the process, she began to see the HEART team as friends, support, and helpers.
- Her life has been positively impacted. She reaches out to the HEART team often alerting us to other unsheltered individuals she camped with to encourage them to give shelter a try.



County Right of way, Silverdale

- After one conversation with outreach, occupants cleaned up their own site and departed location.
- This has been achieved through consistent positive interaction, support, and relationship building.
- Including helping get their battery charged at O'Rielly's, being there for them when they've had too much to drink and want someone to talk to, and being available with boundaries.
- We have demonstrated proactive positive choice making and are seeing it influence many that we work with over time.

Sidewalks, Bremerton

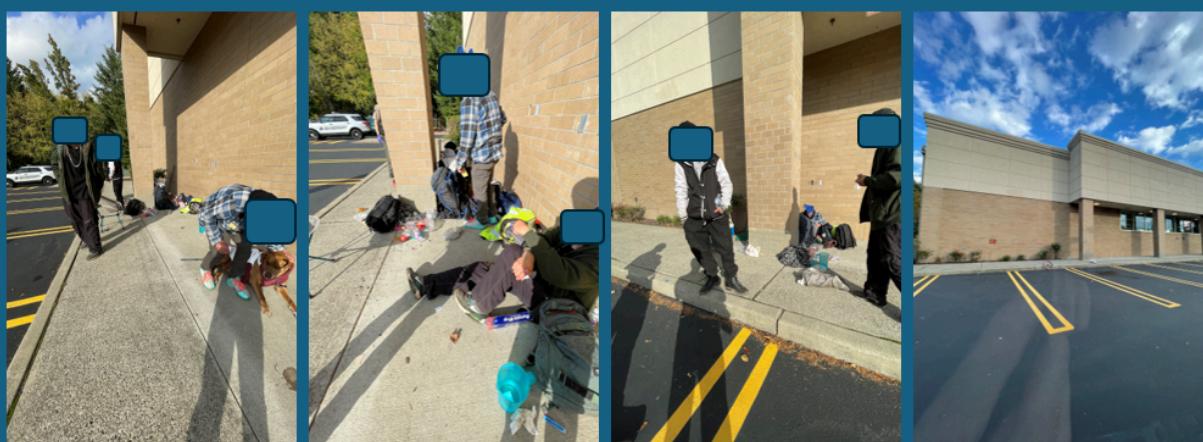
- Two individuals were located sleeping outdoors on the sidewalk under tarps during inclement weather.
- Outreach staff promptly responded, established contact, confirmed identities being individuals we are familiar with, engaged in supportive conversation, provided resource information and shelter options, and distributed snacks
- They were directly referred to the Salvation Army for emergency shelter and services, and they had cleaned up their own location requiring no follow up.

The first two photographs show a sidewalk campsite. A large blue tarp is spread out on the ground, covering personal belongings and a sleeping bag. A shopping cart is visible in the background. The third photograph shows the same sidewalk area, but it is now clean and empty, with a planter box visible on the right.



Parks: Harper Park

- Living in a vehicle for several weeks: The individual engaged in ongoing consultation with the HEART Coordinator, including crisis support via text during periods of high vulnerability.
- Through consistent motivation and the presentation of various service pathways, the individual was successfully connected to the necessary resources.
- Following these interventions, the individual transitioned from the location to a job and place to live, and the site was successfully resolved



Private property: Closed Businesses

- Following several months of consistent outreach and relationship-building across multiple locations, all three individuals have successfully transitioned into stable environments. This includes placements in pet-friendly shelters and enrollment in ongoing case management. Each individual remains actively engaged in defined pathways toward long-term housing stability



Sponsor-a-can

The Sponsor-a-Can program has become an essential partner in our environmental stewardship efforts. By streamlining the recovery and return of abandoned shopping carts, they play a vital role in maintaining the integrity of county lands. Beyond debris mitigation, their team provides valuable field intelligence by identifying emerging sites and offering specialized scouting support for difficult-to-reach terrain, enhancing the HEART team's overall operational reach