



**Department of Commerce**  
Innovation is in our nature.

# Homeless assistance and prevention in Washington State

January 2015

# Homeless Act of 2006: RCW 43.185C

- Created a dedicated funding source (recording fees; \$53 million/year)
  - 66% stays with county governments
  - 34% to Commerce
- Requires data driven local and state planning

“...By July 1, 2015, reduction of the homeless population statewide and in each county by fifty percent....”

# Outputs

- 83,000 people housed annually
- 658 projects
- ~74% non-profit, ~26% faith-based
- \$156 million spent annually (all sources)

# Homeless housing types

- **Short-term rent assistance** (typically less than six months) to move homeless people into housing, typically in a private for-profit rental.
- **Emergency shelters** (typically up to 90 days of housing in a shared space filled with bunk beds).
- **Transitional housing** (up to two years of housing and services, typically in a dedicated building).
- **Short-term rent assistance to prevent evictions** from rental units.
- **Permanent supportive housing** for chronically homeless people with severe and persistent disabilities, usually in a dedicated building.

# “Homeless”

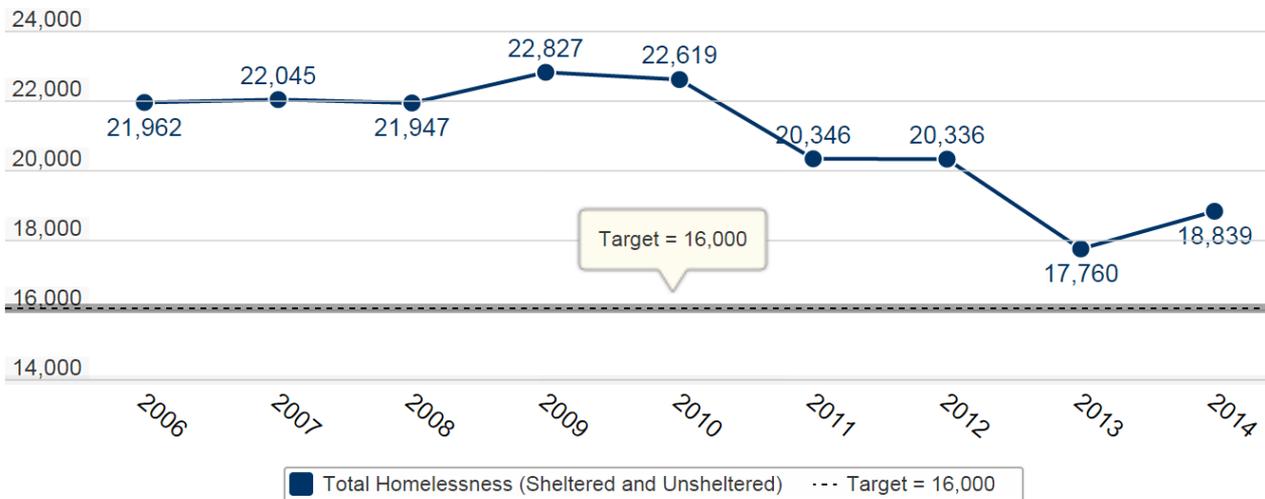
## RCW 43.185C:

"Homeless person" means an individual living outside or in a building not meant for human habitation or which they have no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary housing program which may include a transitional and supportive housing program if habitation time limits exist.

## Federal Department of Education:

...adds doubled-up with family or friends for economic reasons

# Trends in counts of homeless people



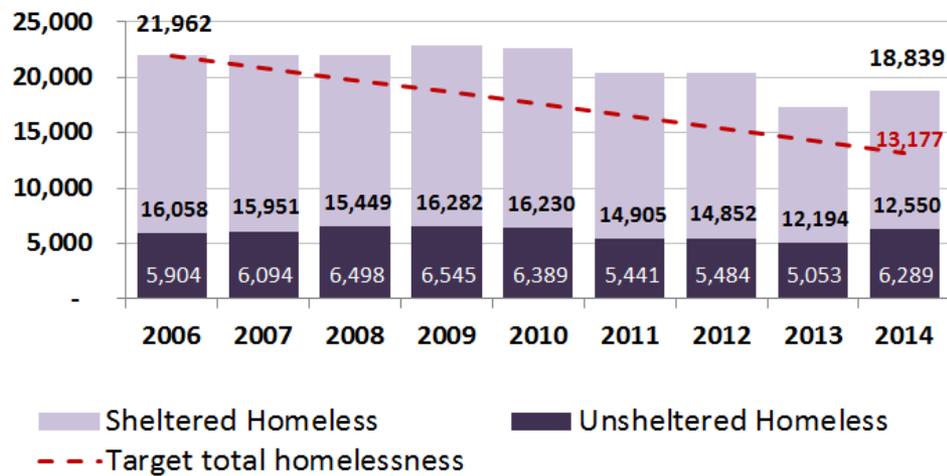
Count of people who are homeless ↓14%

January 2014 count:

- 18,839 TOTAL
- 6,289 unsheltered

Prevalence of unsheltered people in families with children ↓56%; from 1,690 to 840 people

13 counties have met the 50% reduction goal



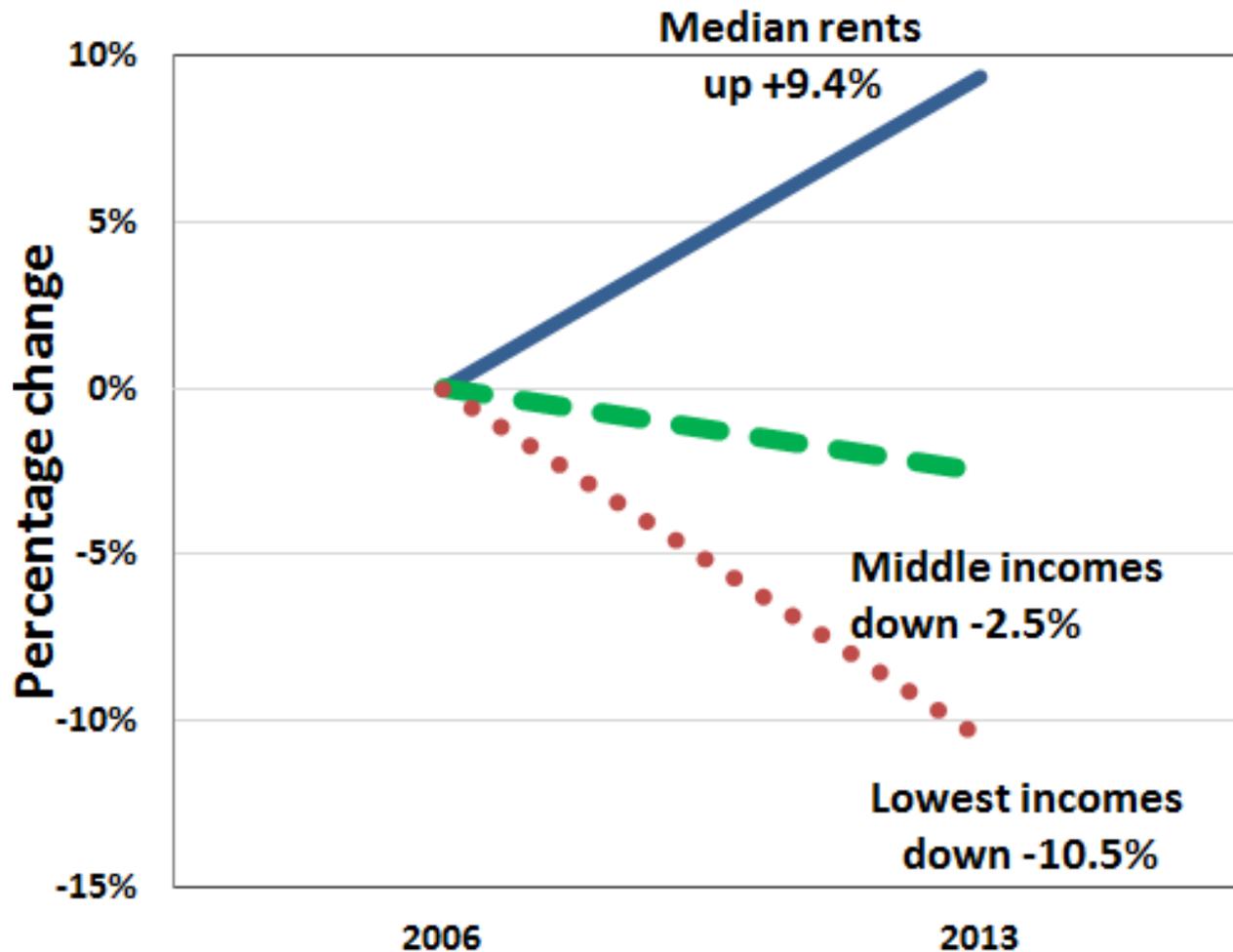
## Drivers of income/housing stability that are stable or moving in the right direction since 2006

- Increases in percentage of high school and college graduates, and increasing reading and math skills.
- Reductions in violent and property crime.
- Reductions in the rate and number of teen pregnancies and births to teenagers.
- Reduction in the divorce rate.
- Stable prevalence of alcohol and illicit drug dependence or abuse.
- Stable prevalence of domestic violence.
- Stable percentage of births outside of marriage
- Stable percent of children living in married-couple households

# Drivers of homelessness that are moving in wrong direction since 2006

- Median rent costs increasing 9 percent.
- Falling incomes for the all but the top 20 percent of households, with the largest decline (-10.5 percent) for the bottom 20 percent.

# Rents increasing/incomes declining



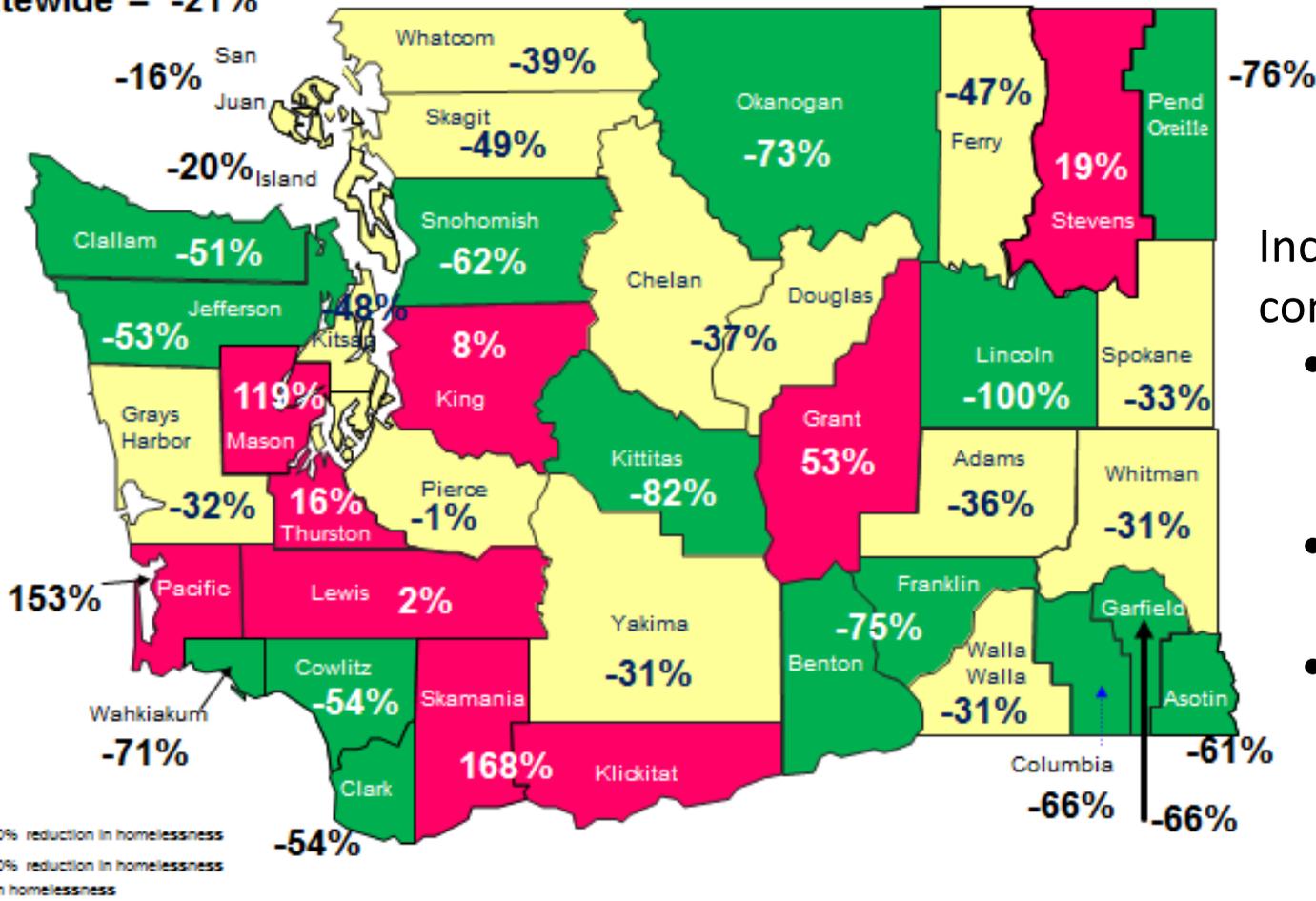
195,235 households with extremely low incomes and severe cost burdens...and likely growing

# Problem / Opportunity

*Inconsistent performance between counties*

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Statewide = -21%



Inconsistent due to combination of:

- Different implementation of best practices
- Different local economies
- Potentially inaccurate point in time counts

# Why differences between counties?

## *I. County implementations of best practices*

1. Coordinated entry
2. Rapid re-housing
3. Use of transitional housing
4. Targeted/limited prevention

## *II. County economies*

1. Change in rent burdens
2. Affordability
3. Rental availability
4. In-migration
5. Income changes

# Current priorities include:

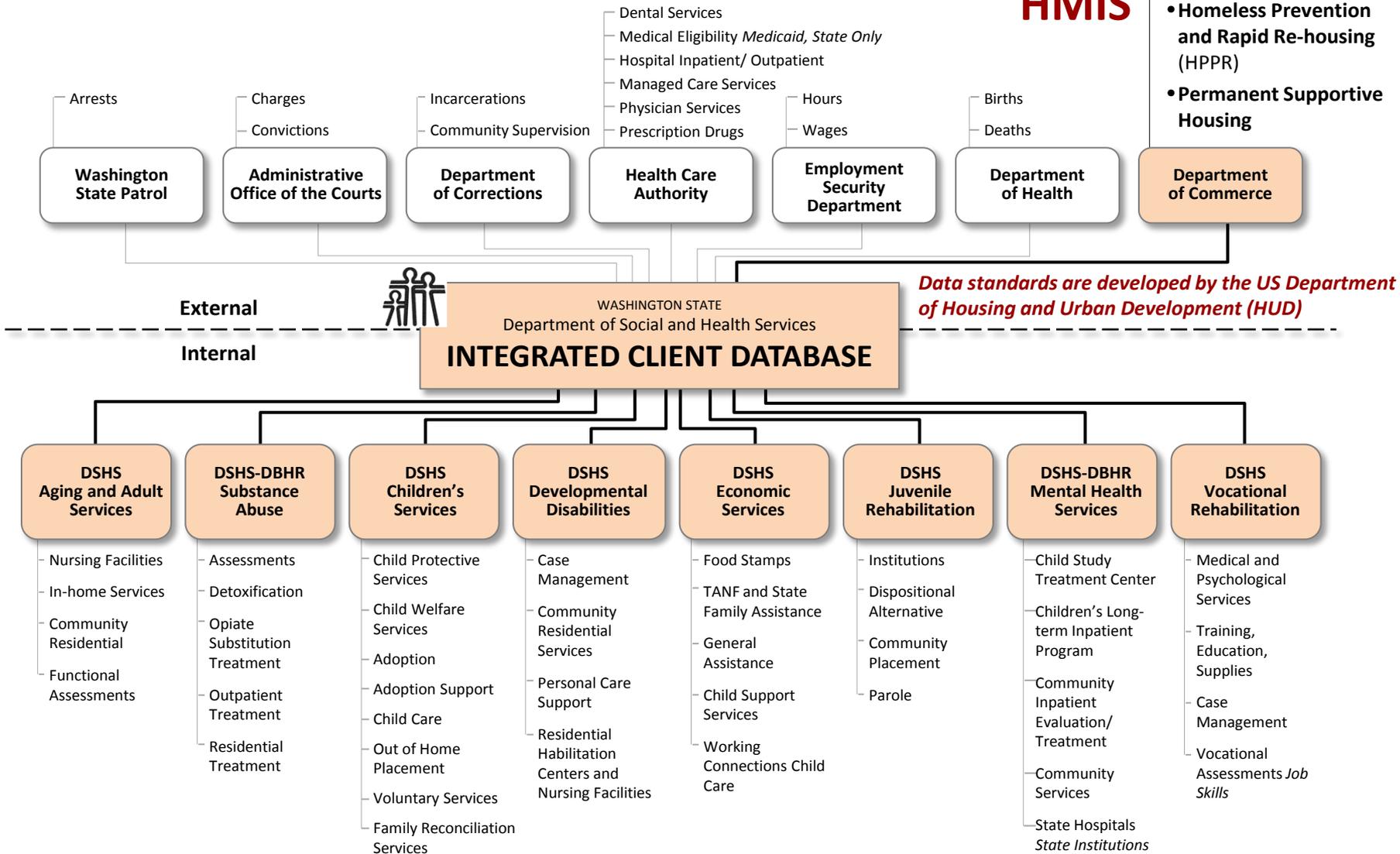
- Creating the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs
- Prioritizing unsheltered vs. unstably housed
- Chronically homelessness veterans
- Homeless TANF families
- Coordinated entry
- Supplement to the Point in Time Count of homeless people
- Approval of Medicaid waiver to fund Supportive Housing services
- Promulgating “Functional Zero” concept
- Tighter cross-system and cross agency integration

# Data partnership

## Homeless Management Information System HMIS

### Housing Assistance

- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPPR)
- Permanent Supportive Housing



# Housing and Essential Needs successes

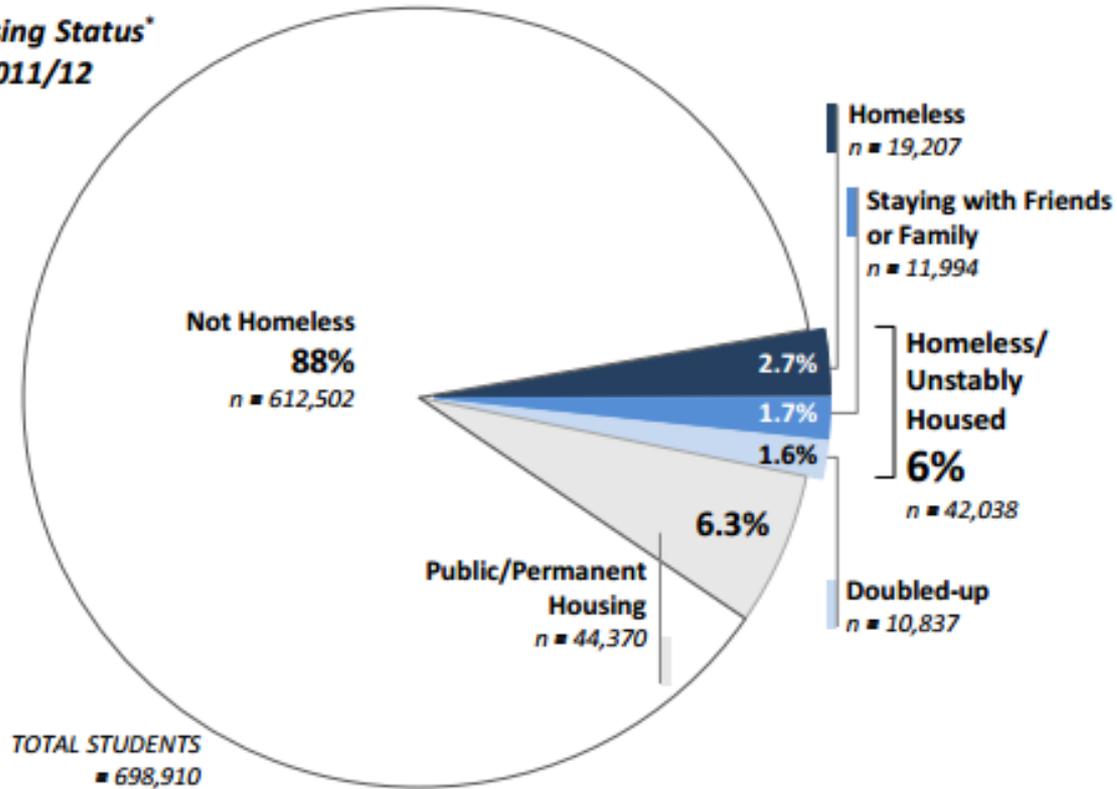
DSHS Research and Data Analysis report: Washington Housing and Essential Needs Program  
(2013)

Versus cash, Housing and Essential Needs:

- Reduces housing instability by 18 percent
- Reduces prison incarceration by 86 percent
- Keeps participants better connected to disability-related medical coverage

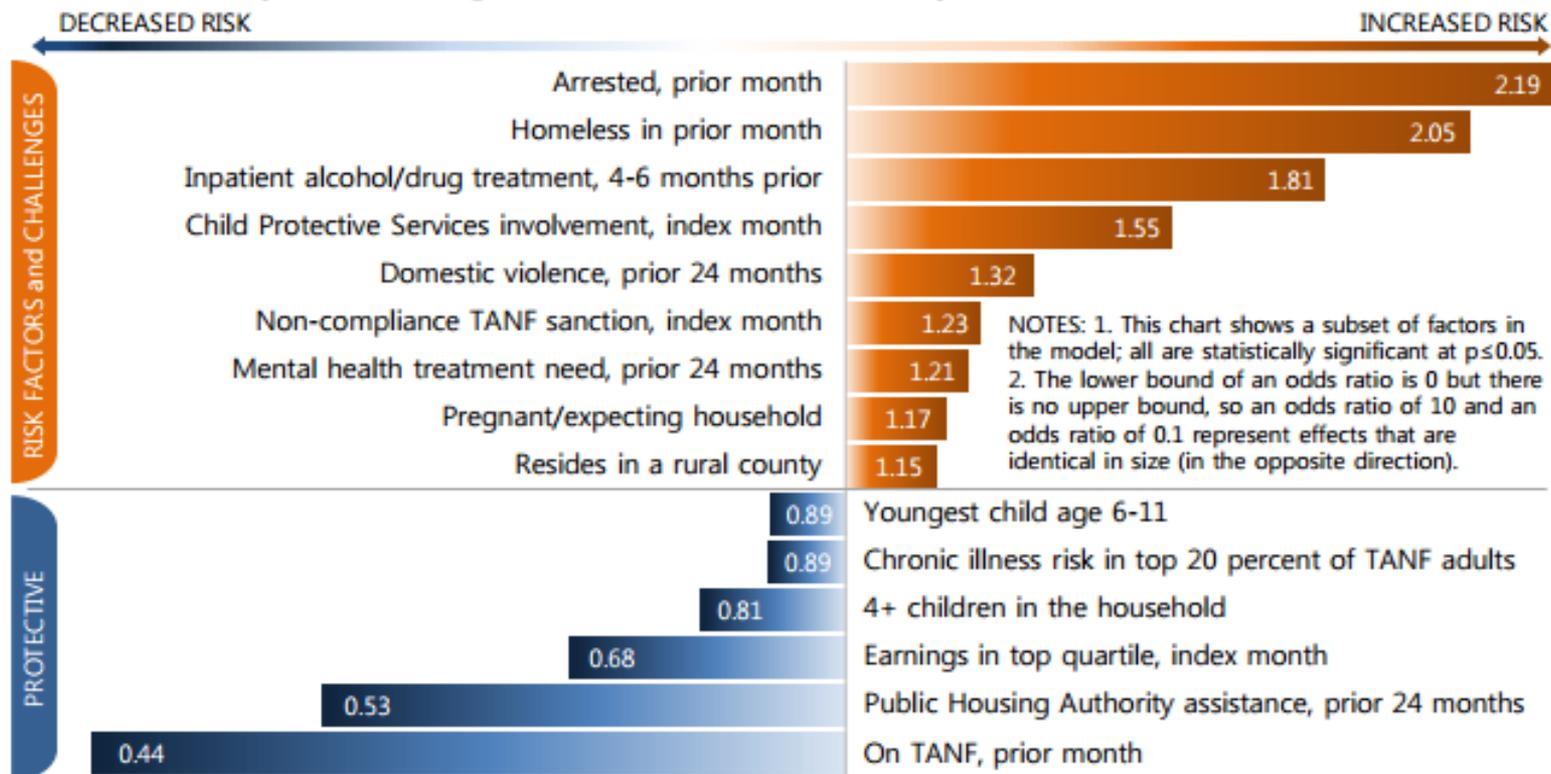
# School children who were homeless during the 2011-12 school

*Housing Status\**  
*AY 2011/12*



# Predicting homelessness among TANF families

## Odds of Experiencing a New Homeless Spell





# Department of Commerce

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For more information

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