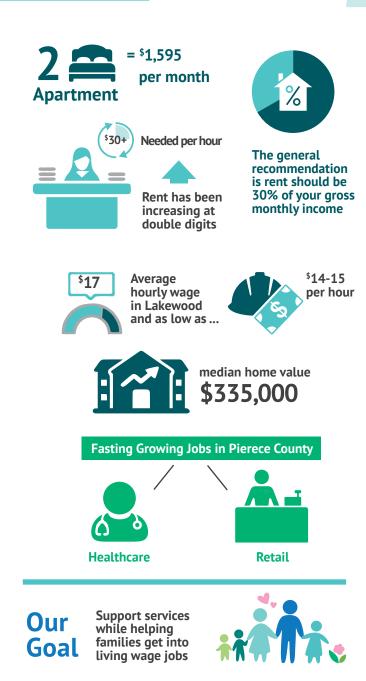# Affordable Housing & Homelessness

Affordable housing and homelessness have become problems impacting every Lakewood resident. Residents need a variety of things, those needs can vary, and they are often intertwined. However, a common denominator is the cost of housing compared to average wages. The average cost for a two bedroom apartment in Lakewood was $1,595 as of October 2019, and rent has been increasing at double digit rates in Pierce County for a number of years. Families are considered cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. Therefore a Lakewood household needs to earn $63,800 per year to afford an average two bedroom apartment. For single parents or households with one earner that translates to more than $30/hr. As of October 2019, the average hourly wage in Lakewood was $17. Attend a local Springbrook Connections meeting, for example, and you will hear that wages for workers in low income communities are closer to $14-15/hr for part time jobs. The median home value as of October 2019 was $335,000. This problem is compounded by the fact that two of the fastest growing jobs in Pierce County are home health care workers and retail workers, both of which typically pay low wages with limited benefits. One strategy for many two-parent households is for both adults to work, but the notoriously prohibitive cost of child care often negates a second income.

2 **Apartment** = **$1,595** per month

$30+ Needed per hour

Rent has been increasing at double digits

The general recommendation is rent should be 30% of your gross monthly income

$17 Average hourly wage in Lakewood and as low as ...

$14-15 per hour

median home value **$335,000**

Fasting Growing Jobs in Pierece County

Healthcare　　**Retail**

Our Goal Support services while helping families get into living wage jobs

One goal for the City of Lakewood and its partners is to help residents understand what the local living wage jobs are, what competencies are required for those jobs, and how someone can attain those competencies through work experience or a training program at one of our local institutions. The goal for the human services funding, then, is to provide as much funding as possible to local organizations to maintain support services that keep Lakewood children, youth and families from becoming homeless while we navigate families into living wage jobs so they no longer require support. This strategy is easier said than done, but is the clearest path to actually solving some problems.