



Progress on Housing Stability &
Prevention for Youth in King County
and Washington State

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Breaking the Cycle of Youth Homelessness

- Youth homelessness is preventable and solvable with coordinated efforts.
- Housing instability in youth is a top predictor of chronic adult homelessness.
- Young people face unique risks like exploitation and trafficking.
- Safe, youth-centered services are essential for effective support.
- Homeless youth are often undercounted and need intentional strategies.



Progress in King County and Washington State

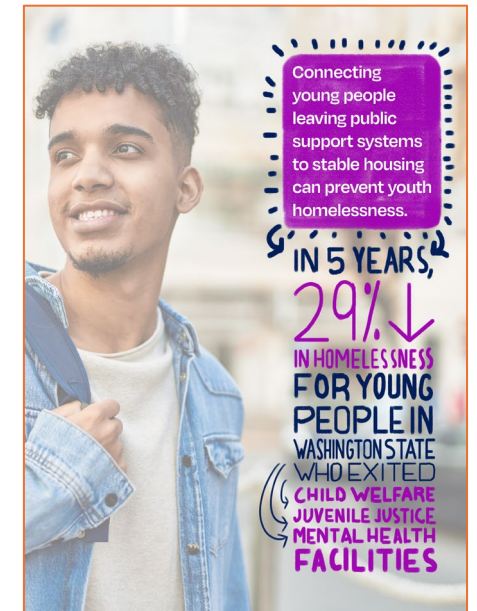
Prevention, Student Homelessness, & Crisis Response Showing “Staggering Results”



The Seattle Times

WA's 'one of a kind' youth homelessness response shows big results

Over the last decade, Washington state has built from nearly nothing a uniquely robust youth homeless response system that is showing staggering results.



Overall Decline: Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness

Washington state's change efforts led to a 40% decline in the total number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

The Office of Homeless Youth began operating in 2016, and numerous policies and funding allocations helped drive this progress between 2016 and 2022.

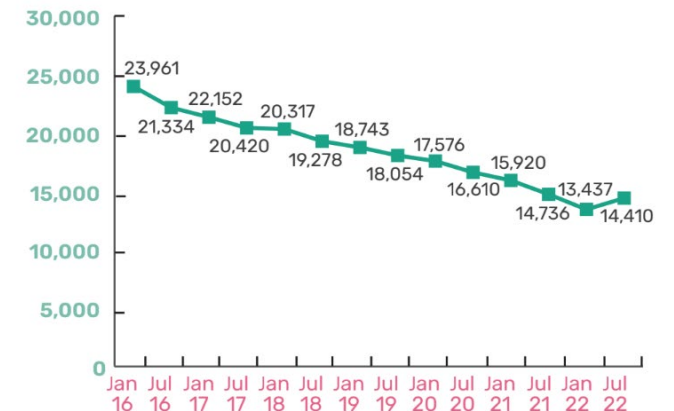
Source: Yes to Yes Report (February 2024)

Down 40%

Decrease in number of unaccompanied youth/young adults experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2022. This means 10,000 fewer youth were experiencing homelessness in 2022.

Data Over Time

Number of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Instability, 2016-2022



Data Source: Department of Commerce Snapshot of Homelessness Reports.

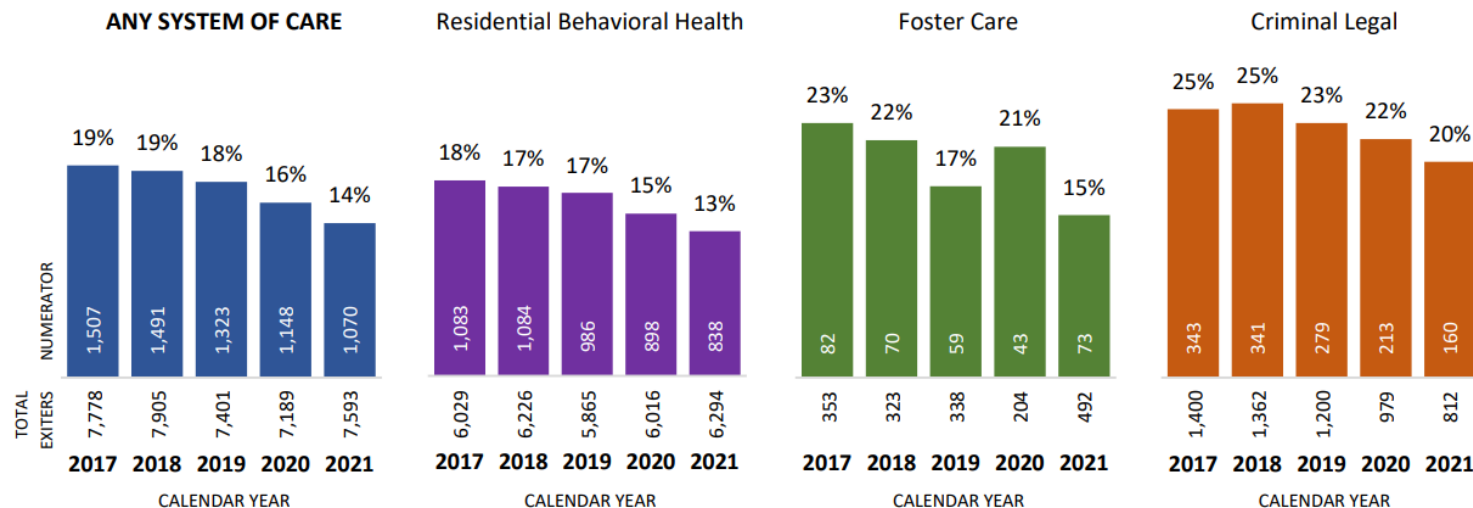
Prevention: Youth Exiting Systems of Care Experiencing More Housing Stability

Policies passed by the Washington State Legislature and new programs funded by the state and philanthropy helped lead to a massive decrease in the number and percentage of youth who experienced homelessness after exiting behavioral health, justice or foster care programs.

Down 29%

Decrease in # and % of unaccompanied youth/young adults experiencing homelessness after exiting a system of care from 2017 to 2021. All three systems saw declines.

5-year trend in homelessness by system of care . . .



Source:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-254.pdf>

Student Homelessness

The connections between academic success and effective efforts to address homelessness and housing instability are clear.

Washington state's change efforts led to a 37% increase in graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness.

Between 2014 and 2023, Washington narrowed the graduation gap between students experiencing homelessness and their housed peers by almost a third.

Source: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Report Card:
<https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

Up 37%

Increase in graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness from 2014 to 2023.

Gap decreased by 10 percentage pts

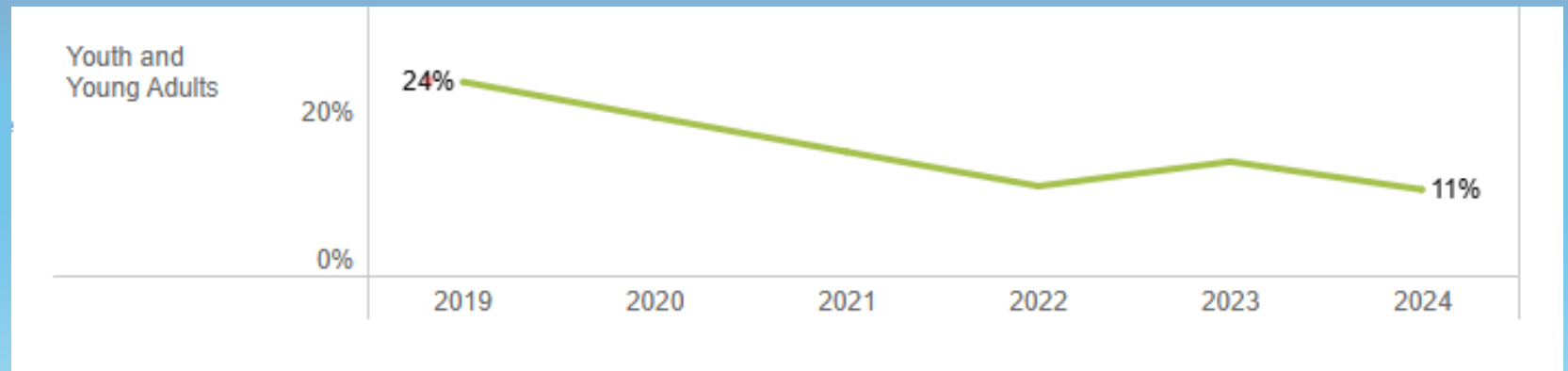
The graduation rate gap between students experiencing homelessness and their housed peers narrowed by 10 percentage points, from 33 points in 2014 to 23 points in 2023.

King County has also seen progress

Improvements in outcomes

- From 2016-22 King County exceeded the state average in reducing youth homelessness (>40%).
- Youth homelessness was steadily declining pre-pandemic - **a 36% decline** from 2017 to 2020.
- 54% fewer YYA returning to homelessness in 6 months between 2019 and 2024 (24% to 11%).

King County Returns to Homelessness within 6 Months



King County's Youth Homelessness Efforts

Are A Model in Systemic Approach to Youth Homelessness

Coordinated effort / Built for Zero

Crisis Response

- Youth are able to access minor (12-17) shelter, young adult (18-24) shelter, Transitional Housing

Wraparound

- Behavioral health, employment, education, housing search
- Youth Engagement Team provides wraparound supports to young people with federal funding

Housing

- Bridge Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing

School-based

- Homeless Student Stability Program providing in school and housing supports for students experiencing homelessness



Local Prevention Efforts

King County leading in scope of prevention interventions

School-Based

- *Upstream* launched with Freshman cohort at Rainier Beach High School – proven model shown to prevent youth homelessness and school disengagement. Will test for other outcomes beyond youth homelessness including violence reduction

Flexible funding and wraparound teams

- Prevention Youth Engagement Team (PYET wraparound team) now federally funded
- Youth and Young Adult Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance Program.
- Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers (128 at Seattle and King County Housing Authorities).

Systems of Care

- H-SYNC (Housing Stability for Youth in Crisis program for youth exiting justice system)
- Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project expanded to King County – flexible funding and diversion for systems-involved youth
- Youth Villages (YV) Lifeset. Enhanced case management for youth in foster care system

Coordinated Prevention Effort

- Fortifying Futures for Our Youth Project intended to prevent youth incarceration or homelessness.





Challenges Threatening Progress on Youth Homelessness

- Programs operate on narrow financial margins, risking stability
- Rising employment costs and funding cuts stress service providers
- Budget cuts at the state level have occurred and likely to increase
- Federal budget cuts and funding restrictions have dramatically impacted services
- Donations have stagnated post-pandemic.

Shay's Story

In 2024, the YMCA Social Impact Center had the opportunity to support Shay, a driven and resilient young woman whose journey has been nothing short of inspiring. Before arriving at Severson Transitional Living Program (TLP), Shay navigated various shelters and foster homes while growing up in Seattle. Despite facing numerous challenges, her determination was unshaken.

Shay navigated various shelters and foster homes while growing up in Seattle. Despite facing numerous challenges, her determination remained unshaken. From the moment Shay entered the program, Shay was ready to succeed, undeterred by the traumas of her past. She immediately took on two jobs while attending beauty college to pursue her dream of becoming an aesthetician.

Her hard work and perseverance paid off: within just seven months, Shay received a permanent housing voucher and moved into her own apartment. The program supported her transition with essential household items and aftercare assistance.

Today, Shay is thriving in her final year of college and has secured a new job that values her contributions and aligns with her passions. Her story exemplifies the true meaning of resilience and the power of self-advocacy – one step at a time.





Key Service Areas & Funding Needs for YYA Support

- Housing programs need \$1.2M for transitional and supportive housing.
- Shelter services require \$3.4M to meet demand and expand capacity.
- Drop-in centers need \$634K for safety, food, and resource access.
- Case management and behavioral health require \$384K countywide.
- Prevention, diversion, and outreach need \$596K to reduce homelessness.

*As identified by the King County Youth Service Providers Coalition

APPENDIX

The Y-Social Impact Center (YSIC) provides youth and young adults with wraparound services including shelter, behavioral health support, employment training, and homelessness prevention & intervention services.



829 Foster Care Youth Supported



3,938 People Were Provided Behavioral Health Services



2,226 Youth and Young Adults Accessed Housing Services



BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH
SERVICES



HOUSING &
HOMELESS
SERVICES



FOSTER
CARE
SERVICES



RESEARCH &
ADMINISTRATION



SOCIAL IMPACT CENTER

2024 Washington State Landscape Scan Data

WA Unaccompanied YYA Landscape Scan

Data Summary: Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness in 2022

14,410

Unstably housed or homeless
in **one month**.²

15,338

Accessed homeless services
in **one year**.³

5,001

Unaccompanied students in
the **school year**.⁴

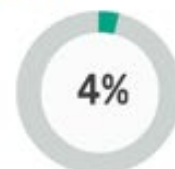
In 2022, of the 15,338 unaccompanied young people who
accessed the homelessness system, there were:



BIPOC



LGBTQ+



Gender
Expansive



Minors



Pregnant/
Parenting



Disabled

Data Source: HMIS.

Before accessing homeless services, young people were:



31%
unsheltered



24%
staying with
friends or family



19%
sheltered within
homeless
system



10%
permanently
housed



16%
unknown

Data Source: HMIS.

1 in 100

Young people aged 10-24⁵ in
WA accessed the homeless
system

Data Source: Homeless Management
Information System (HMIS) and US Census.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific
Islander young people were

9 times

more likely to access the
homeless system than White
young people

Black and African American
young people were

7 times

more likely to access the
homeless system than White
young people

Data Source: HMIS and WA Office of
Financial Management.

Of the unaccompanied
young people permanently
housed in 2020...



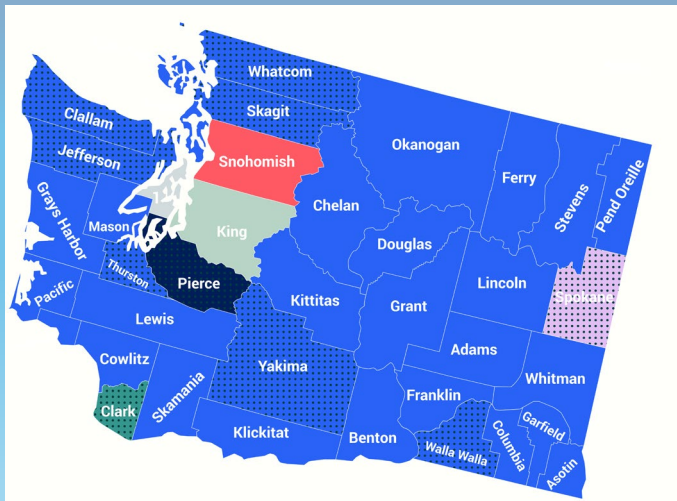
75%

retained housing after two years

Data Source: HMIS.

More Funding and Better Access to Services

Now, all but one county now have access to federal or state funding for youth homelessness services. Federal and state funding dramatically increased through Office of Homeless Youth, Homeless Student Stability Program (state) and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (federal).



94% Coverage

All but one county now have services for youth experiencing homelessness. Prevention services have also dramatically increased.

Gap decreased by 10 percentage pts

The graduation rate gap between students experiencing homelessness and their housed peers narrowed by 10 percentage points, from 33 points in 2014 to 23 points in 2023.

More Learnings: *Four Different Approaches Key*

Community ownership matters, but communities can't make change alone – and neither can funders. Collaboration is needed between government, funders, providers, advocates, and young people.

Prevention Efforts Work

Preventing youth from experiencing homelessness by building supports within communities, schools, and public systems works.

Homelessness Intervention Raises Graduation Rates

Increased support for students experiencing homelessness leads to increased graduation rates.

Crisis Response is Essential

Ending youth homelessness starts with data-driven strategies and supports. To do this effectively, data must inform the response.

Field Building Leads to Systems Change

Organizing field leaders to support policy development and adequate funding results in proven solutions and the scaling of successful coordinated community systems.