



Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF)



Having a stable home provides youth and families with a foundation for economic success, quality education, and good health. However, **25,000+ adults, youth, and families were experiencing homelessness during a single night count in 2022**, the Point-in-Time (PIT) count. Families and youth are known to be especially harder to capture in these counts, so it is estimated many more youth and families are experiencing homelessness. This is reflected in our most recent analysis of 2019 data showing **40,000+ Washington State K-12 public school students were experiencing homelessness**, including students who are doubled up and not captured in PIT counts. What's more, people who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) or LGBTQ2+ disproportionately experience homelessness. The Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) addresses this problem in an equitable and innovative way.

WYFF funds organizations and tribes trusted within communities.

Created in 2004, WYFF combines public and private dollars administered through Building Changes, a nonprofit creating equitable responses to homelessness in Washington State. Building Changes grants these funds to nonprofit organizations and tribes that have built trust within their communities and can nimbly and effectively assist youth and families with innovative, culturally appropriate services. Building Changes also provides technical assistance and evaluation to identify the most effective programs. Best practices can then be scaled up statewide to improve the response to this crisis. To date, we have awarded **\$62.7 million in grants to 122 grantees across 26 counties**. In FY2022, 8 WYFF grantees served 1,564 individuals in 1,201 households experiencing homelessness. Of those enrolled in projects other than street outreach, **60% exited into stable housing**.

Legislators can further reduce child, youth, and family homelessness by increasing funding in WYFF from \$4M to \$10M.

WYFF is a unique program vital to Washington State.

- WYFF is a statewide program, serving rural and urban areas.
- WYFF serves youth and families who are often ineligible or not prioritized for many other homeless and housing programs.
- WYFF prioritizes marginalized groups that are continually overrepresented in homeless populations. WYFF grantees are trusted organizations and tribes that know what approaches work best for their communities. They provide culturally appropriate, trauma-informed services driven by racial equity and created and implemented by people with lived experience.
- Unlike traditional housing support services, WYFF uses flexible, creative, data-driven strategies tailored to meet people's individual needs to equitably address homelessness.



More funding is needed to meet the demand for services.

- Often invisible, youth and families are experiencing a homelessness crisis in Washington.
- Demand for this program in our state is very high. In 2022, 57 organizations applied for WYFF for a combined total of \$37.5 million in requests. This was approximately 13 times the amount Building Changes had available to regrant and therefore Building Changes could only fund six of those organizations.

With more funds, WYFF can serve more youth and families and improve services.

- Increase the number of grants allocated to better meet the needs of communities.
- Increase programmatic staff capacity.
- Better support BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ communities overrepresented in homeless populations.
- Support more youth and families who are often ineligible or not prioritized for other homeless and housing programs.
- Advance flexible, collaborative, data-driven strategies to address crises across geographic areas.

WYFF grantees tailor services to youth and families, particularly in BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ communities.



Enhanced Rapid Re-Housing (ERRH) is a Housing First intervention that connects families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing in the private rental market and resources to help them retain their housing. It uses a Rapid Re-Housing model with enhanced supportive services to further racial equity by holistically addressing communities' specific needs in culturally appropriate, trauma-informed ways.



Diversion is an effective, common-sense approach that can help people get housed quickly, safely, and simply. It includes creative problem solving to generate custom, person-centered solutions and light case management to reduce barriers. It may also include flexible funding when needed.



Flexible Funding is one-time financial assistance to help people secure and maintain housing. It can cover expenses such as first and last months' rent, security deposits, utility payments, past due eviction debt, car repair, and childcare.



Critical Transition Coaching (CTC) supports young people exiting foster care or other publicly funded systems of care through holistic resources to help them develop skills, get job training, find employment, identify education goals, and build a support network before and during their transition. The goal is to create access and choice, so that young people have greater agency in finding housing options that affirm all their identities and experiences, particularly unaccompanied youth of color and LGBTQ2+ young people.



Healing Services are culturally based, focusing on trauma recovery support so families can stay stably housed. Flexible, holistic housing interventions and racial healing services help families recover from trauma by strengthening their sense of cultural identity, community, and sense of belonging.

“One youth was exiting foster care and didn’t have anywhere to go. Flexible funding provided a hotel that gave us time to engage with them in CTC coaching sessions. The young person moved to a small emergency shelter where they had their own room, started working, and eventually moved into permanent housing. When they got the coaching support, we saw their whole self-esteem improve.”

—GABE STONE, Critical Transitions Coordinator at Northwest Youth Services, a WYFF grantee

