



**Washington Families Fund
Systems Initiative Evaluation:
2012 Interim Report**

Appendix II: Organizational Case Studies

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Appendix II-A: Solid Ground Organizational Case Study King County

Overview

Solid Ground has played a pivotal role in combating homelessness and poverty and their effects in King County since 1974. Solid Ground is home to a variety of services and advocacy efforts, initiated in response to community need, to address homelessness, hunger and poverty, and its root causes. The organization provides emergency shelter and transitional and permanent housing, along with preventive and supportive services. Solid Ground has served as a local leader in developing shelter programs, nutrition programs and services, financial assistance programs, and advocacy initiatives; such leadership is apparent in the replication of Community Voicemail, one service provided to homeless individuals by Solid Ground.

Solid Ground was chosen as an organization to highlight and follow over the course of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative because of its prominence both locally and nationally. Solid Ground's participation in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative will provide an opportunity to understand if and how the Initiative affects work and services at a large multiservice organization. The purpose of the organizational case studies is to gather information from organizations that provide housing and services in the three demonstration counties to understand how the Initiative is being implemented; the role that the organizations are playing in the Initiative; what, if any, impact the Initiative is having on organizations; and the changes the organizations are experiencing due to the Initiative, other changes in the system, and other environmental and contextual factors. These organizational case studies will be conducted annually as a part of the systems study component.

This case study begins with details on Solid Ground's programs and services; including an organizational profile, an overview of its structure and staffing, a description of Solid Ground's collaborations with other organizations, its funding sources, information on the organization's target population, and details on the housing and support services provided. Next the case study addresses Solid Ground's role in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative, including planning and implementation of the Initiative and families' perspectives of Solid Ground's services for homeless families. The case study concludes by outlining the next steps in the case study process.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

Solid Ground has operated in King County for more than 30 years working to end poverty by providing services tailored to community needs and advocacy for public policies that address root causes of poverty, with an emphasis on racism. At its inception in 1974 the current Solid Ground was known as Fremont Public Association, an organization serving Seattle/King County by providing services to help

families and individuals obtain stable housing, access sustainable food and gain freedom from discrimination. Developed by local activists and the then future mayor of Fremont (one of Seattle’s most economically distressed communities), Fremont Public Association provided services (emergency food, clothing banks, and an employment program) in response to local needs. In 2007 the agency adopted Solid Ground as its name to reflect the scope of services the organization provides to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty attain or return to a sense of stability.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

Solid Ground owns and operates five housing/shelter programs, encompassing 25 units of emergency shelter, 90 units of transitional housing, and 51 units of permanent housing. Solid Ground’s emergency shelter includes Broadview Shelter and the Family Shelter, which include 10 and 15 emergency shelter units, respectively. The organization operates four transitional housing programs—Broadview (21 units), Bethlehem House (1 house), Sand Point Family Housing (26 units), and Santos Place (42 units). Brettler Family Place is Solid Ground’s first permanent supportive housing program and includes 51 units. Upon completion of Solid Ground’s Capital Campaign, an effort to house families while contributing to Seattle’s plan to repurpose the Sand Point Naval Station, there will be two additional permanent supportive housing sites with 20 and 34 units, respectively.

Housing Program	Number of Units	Direct Service FTE*
Emergency Shelter	25	
Broadview Shelter	10	17
Family Shelter	15	1.6
Transitional Housing	90	
Broadview Transitional	21	17
Bethlehem House	1 (for a large family)	1.6
Sand Point Family Housing	26	2.7
Santos Place (Located at Sand Point)	42	2.7
Permanent Housing	51—current 106—projected	
Brettler Family Place (Located at Sand Point)	51	2.7

*There are a total of 17 FTE for Broadview facilities, a total of 1.6 FTE for Family Shelter and Bethlehem House facilities, and a total of 2.7 FTE for Sand Point facilities.

Staffing for Solid Ground's housing programs is organized by program rather than housing type. Thus, a total of 17 direct service full-time equivalents (FTE) provide case management services to residents of both Broadview Shelter and Broadview Transitional Housing residents. There are 1.6 direct service FTE for both Family Shelter and Bethlehem House and, currently 2.7 FTE for Sand Point housing facilities (Sand Point Family Housing, Santos Place, and Brettler Family Place).

Collaboration with Other Organizations

In effort to provide holistic care to homeless clients, Solid Ground collaborates with multiple external organizations, including the Seattle Housing Authority, Low Income Housing Institute, and Plymouth Housing to provide housing services to its homeless client population. Solid Ground works with Health Care for the Homeless and Neighborhood Health Centers to provide health care assistance to its consumers. Sound Mental Health and Valley Cities aid in providing mental health and substance abuse services to Solid Ground's consumers. Clients may also access education and employment services from Worksource, YWCA, Career Connections, Seattle Vocational Institute, and Washington Women's Employment Education Program. Nutrition classes are offered by Cooking Matters, formerly Operation Frontline, and Solid Ground staff collaborate with school liaisons and child care organizations to provide children's services.

Funding

Solid Ground is largely funded by public dollars, with approximately eighty percent of its income in 2010 being city, county, state, federal, or other government-related dollars. As part of public funding, Solid Ground received funding from both the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) and the Veterans and Human Services Levy to provide homelessness prevention services. It also received Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds to provide emergency shelter. With a total income of more than 24 million dollars in 2010, the community's support of Solid Ground can be seen in the more than 3.5 million dollars the organization received from in-kind and individual donations and private grants and sponsorships. Other sources of income for 2010 include, but are not limited to, vendor payments and fiscal agency fees, client co-payments, and interest income.

Target Population and Clients Served

Solid Ground serves families and individuals from throughout King County. All of the organization's emergency shelter and housing units are open to families, both one- and two-parent families. Furthermore, Broadview Emergency and Transitional Housing specifically targets mothers with children under the age of 18.

Among the 64,619 people served by Solid Ground in 2010 and based on the 26 percent of clients who provided racial/ethnicity information, Caucasian (41%) is the most highly represented race and African American (27%) is the second largest group. The remaining racial/ethnic groups include Multiracial

(12%), Asian (8%), Latino (8%), Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (2%), and Native American (2%). Clients' primary languages (excluding English) are Spanish, Somali, Russian, Amharic, Pashtu, and Vietnamese.

Agency leadership recognizes sexual abuse and chemical dependency as prevalent challenges within the client population. Direct service staff members at Solid Ground identify affordable housing, family wage jobs, extensive debt, terminal illnesses (i.e., brain tumors and leukemia) and unmet medical and dental needs as clients' common needs and challenges.

Housing Services Provided

During 2010 Solid Ground helped 430 families obtain emergency shelter, placed 306 individuals and families in transitional housing, and helped 382 formerly homeless families to move into permanent housing.

Emergency Shelter. Broadview provides housing to single, homeless women who have experienced domestic violence and have children. Broadview is completely confidential to protect families. Residents of Broadview emergency shelter may receive onsite, 24-hour support from program staff, including food, clothing, transportation, domestic violence legal advocacy and weekly support groups, parenting support, drug and alcohol counseling, and resource referrals. Families who speak limited English are also provided translation and assistance with immigrant processes. Children's services for families living in Broadview emergency shelter include onsite child care (during parents' meetings), support groups, and educational and recreational activities.

Family Shelter, located in North Seattle, consists of 14 fully furnished, scattered-site apartments released from Seattle Housing Authority to be used as emergency shelter for families with children. Motel vouchers are provided to wait-listed families for short-term emergency shelter. Family Shelter offers its residents case management and assistance with finding and retaining permanent or long-term transitional housing. Residents may also receive referrals for additional needed resources (e.g., food, clothing, and mental health treatment).

Transitional Housing with Services. Broadview transitional housing provides families with housing for up to 18 months. Residents of Broadview transitional housing have access to onsite, 24-hour support from program staff. Services available to emergency shelter residents are also available to Broadview transitional housing residents—food, clothing, transportation, domestic violence legal advocacy and weekly support groups, parenting support, drug and alcohol counseling, and resource referrals. Translation and assistance with immigration processes are available for families who speak limited English. The following children's services are available to Broadview residents: onsite child care (during parents' meetings), support groups, and educational and recreational activities.

Bethlehem House, a six-bedroom house located in West Seattle, is a transitional housing site for large families of seven or more individuals. Residents of Bethlehem House have access to services provided by

Family Shelter. These services encompass case management, assistance with permanent or long-term transitional housing searches, and referrals for other resources (e.g., food, clothing, and mental health treatment).

Sand Point Family Housing and Santos Place are located at Sand Point. Families with children under 18 years may move directly from homelessness into Sand Point Family Housing. Santos Place houses single homeless men and women. Residents of both Sand Point Family Housing and Santos Place may stay for a maximum of two years and receive case management and support services (e.g., educational and job training programs) during their stay.

Permanent Housing. Brettler Family Place is located at Sand Point and houses formerly homeless families. Brettler Family Place provides permanent housing and support services and houses the first 51 units of supportive permanent housing at this location. Solid Ground plans to add an additional 55 permanent supportive housing units that will provide housing to families and individuals. The expansion includes 20 additional units for families and 34 units for single men and women, more specifically older adults, veterans, and people living with disabilities.

Support Services Provided

JourneyHome. Homeless families that are currently living on the street, in shelter, or in transitional housing receive intensive case management services and housing search support. There is flexible funding available to program participants for moving costs, debt repayment, furniture, and other moving- and employment-related expenses. The Stable Families Project provides support to families, with at least one dependent child, who have had more than one episode of homelessness. These families may receive time-unlimited case management, emergency financial aid, clinical mental health assessments and referrals, money management classes, and domestic violence support after six months of living in permanent housing.

Homelessness Prevention. Mortgage counseling, financial fitness classes, and one-time loans and grants are provided to tenants and homeowners at risk of eviction or foreclosure. Mortgage counseling is provided by a HUD-certified housing counselor.

Community Voicemail. Voice mailboxes are provided to individuals without phones—either homeless or housed—to aid in their search for housing and/or employment. This service is offered to Solid Ground clients and several King County social service organizations at no cost. Subscribers to Community Voicemail also receive broadcast messages alerting them of community resources and events.

Family Assistance Program. Solid Ground provides free legal services to help individuals and families obtain or increase public benefits that have been denied, terminated, or reduced.

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Planning

Leadership at Solid Ground has participated in discussions and multiple groups to improve care for consumers and help end homelessness. The Deputy Housing Director was involved in discussions on coordinated entry and served on the board for Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH). SKCCH and Seattle Human Services Coalition serve as vehicles for change in services coordination. Organizational leadership has been involved with work related to centralized assessment, intake, and tracking, but expressed uncertainty about the outcome for the system and for Solid Ground. Agency staff have participated in development activities (i.e., attending committee meetings and participating in discussions) associated with the Initiative. However, there have been minimal Initiative-related changes to date. Solid Ground's current efforts that relate to the five pillars of the Systems Change Initiative are presented below.

Implementation

Family Identification and Intake. Families are referred to Solid Ground by other human service agencies, including the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), or contact the organization directly to access services. The client telephone line has a voice messaging system that instructs callers of the necessary next steps. This line receives approximately 100 calls per day. Service providers or families complete an application that is submitted to Solid Ground electronically or by mail.

A lottery system is used to identify applicants who will receive housing and, upon selection, staff contact families to notify them of openings. There is no wait list for Solid Ground housing programs. Criminal background checks are performed on all potential residents; individuals with records of violent criminal activity, sex crimes or drug manufacturing are not accepted. Information collected at intake is largely based on requirements of various funders. All staff members utilize one assessment form which includes a scale assessing the client's current situation. The score reflects whether the person is stably housed, in danger of eviction, currently homeless, etc. Program assignment (e.g., rapid housing or transitional housing) is based on this score.

Solid Ground staff have discussed centralized screening and assessment. If implemented, this would take place at intake hubs where intake staff would have a list of available resources and clients would be screened and directed to the most suitable community resource. Leadership at Solid Ground believes that coordinated entry would shorten the screening process and help service providers to determine the best program and would like to see coordinated entry implemented more broadly.

Prevention. Housing programs provide assistance for eviction prevention. Financial fitness classes, mortgage counseling, and the tenant hotline are homelessness prevention efforts by Solid Ground.

Solid Ground plans to work on issues related to education. A Children's Advocate will be hired to help with education-related early intervention. Direct service staff expressed a need to provide increased

support to parents and early intervention to children to increase family likelihood of success. Case managers envision greater focus on Planned Parenthood counseling and on helping high school aged children to remain in school.

Rapid Housing. Case managers send referral lists to Wellspring Family Services who post the lists on Safe Harbors, King County's Web-based Homeless Management Information System. Case managers refer to this information system to select families for follow-up. Providers throughout King County refer families to JourneyHome. Individuals then work with JourneyHome staff to identify needs for up to six months post-permanent housing placement. Organizational leadership finds that JourneyHome case managers can sometimes find housing within one day and equates this to rapid housing.

Tailored Services. Case management is client-centered and individually tailored. Case managers receive in-house and community training on cultural competency to help with providing individualized services.

Economic Opportunity. Job training is referred to partnering organizations and many begin attending job training while in shelter. Families who would like to further their education may attend University of Washington via the local community college.

Family Perspective of the Homeless Families System

A focus group was completed with four individuals, three mothers and one father who were living in Solid Ground shelter facilities at the time of the focus group. Each family had two or more children, ranging from two weeks to 33 years of age. All of the families were living in one of Solid Ground's housing facilities and had been living there for about a month.

Places where the families had been living prior to obtaining housing with Solid Ground varied—one family had been living in a family shelter (other than Solid Ground), a mother had been living in a sober house while separated from her son, another family had been sleeping in their minivan, and one had been staying with the mother's parents, but had a deadline for moving out. Prior to needing shelter, the families looked for other resources, including rental assistance, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and low-income permanent housing. One family turned down emergency shelter because it did not allow the father to remain with his family.

Some participants of the focus group had previously received rental assistance, while others expressed frustration regarding homelessness prevention services (i.e., utility and rent assistance). One mother had been receiving a housing subsidy, but expressed that the subsidy was not enough to cover the costs of her rent. One family was responsible for paying utilities, although the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) that the family received each month was not enough to cover the monthly cost of utilities.

The families had learned about Solid Ground from case workers at other human service organizations such as hospitals, DSHS, child service agencies and 211. One mother learned about Solid Ground from her Child Protective Services worker and moved into Solid Ground housing as she was being reunited with her son who had been living in a group home. She expressed that Solid Ground was the only option that allowed her teenage son to live with her.

When asked if there was anything making it difficult to leave shelter, families said that limited incomes and previous housing-related debt were barriers. Each family spoke of evictions, previous move-out fees, and limited income. Three of the four participants were looking for work to help with paying for rent and retaining housing. Likewise, three of the four participants were also enrolled in educational programs and received or planned to apply for support—in-kind (i.e., computer and printer) and monetary (i.e., federal financial aid)—to do so.

One parent discussed unmet expectations of the “system” and the system’s inability to coordinate services in a manner that helps families to succeed, “I wish there was more of a one-stop shop where you can go, but there would be problems with that too. Services and funds get broke up to so many agencies.”

Nearly all families were in various stages of the process to obtain/secure housing and had been working with Solid Ground case managers to coordinate debt payment assistance and/or find permanent housing. Each member of the group had multiple case managers—ranging from two to an individual’s estimate of 20 to 30 case managers. Even so, all participants reported having at least one case manager helping them to obtain permanent housing.

Challenges and Gaps

The organization would like to streamline the intake paperwork process to reduce the time between screening and assessment for program placement. Agency staff identified challenges with data entry into Safe Harbors, the Web-based Homeless Management Information System. Agency staff believe Safe Harbors lacks user-friendliness and is being required to perform double and, in some cases, triple data entry into multiple information systems. The amount of time case managers spend on data entry is viewed as inefficient by leadership.

Child care for families and job availability are current gaps in resources. Limited shelter in King County presents a gap in services. There is an estimated 200 units of family shelter in King County, and Solid Ground receives between 600 and 700 unduplicated calls from families each month.

Next Steps

Semiannual site visits will inform the next case study and help to highlight organizational changes that have occurred as a result of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative. The organization's progress in implementing changes based on the five pillars—coordinated entry, prevention, rapid housing, tailored services, and economic opportunity—will be the focus of coming case studies.

Appendix II-B King County Housing Authority Organizational Case Study King County

Overview

King County Housing Authority (KCHA) has had a central role in creating affordable housing in King County since 1939. KCHA has a central role in King County's homeless service system providing housing resources and having the Executive Director and other key staff serve in leadership roles in the King County Funders' Group and Junior Funders' Group.

KCHA was chosen as a case study organization to highlight and follow over the course of the Westat evaluation of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative due to the organization's prominence both locally and nationally. The case study will provide an opportunity to understand if and how the Initiative impacts the work of the housing authority and, in turn, the roles that the housing authority may play that impact the system.

This summary begins with a profile of KCHA, including a brief description of its current resources and capacity, with a particular focus on its Moving to Work (MTW) status that enhances its ability to engage in new initiatives and ideas. We then summarize the role it has played in homelessness and its current involvement in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

KCHA, the second largest housing authority in Washington, operates throughout King County, excluding the cities of Seattle and Renton, each of which has its own housing authorities. KCHA covers a large jurisdiction as King County is the 14th most populous in the nation, covering a geographic area of 2,130 square miles that include over 37 suburban cities. The county's population continues to grow, from approximately 1.5 million in 1990 and 1.7 million in 2000 to 1.9 million in 2010. KCHA currently supports more than 18,000 households across 23 suburban cities and unincorporated areas throughout King County.

KCHA has 3,150 low rent units and 339 full-time employees, with an annual consolidated budget of approximately \$132.2 million (including tax credit partnerships). KCHA also owns and manages a public housing complex in Olympia and administers 80 units of public housing under contract to the Sedro-Woolley Housing Authority. KCHA has an asset base valued at roughly \$393 million and approximately \$14 million in capital improvements are scheduled each year. Moreover, beginning in January 2011 KCHA operated a range of housing initiatives, including permanent housing programs, housing choice vouchers, and other housing related programs.

Moving to Work

A key distinction that KCHA shares with 33 of the more than 3,800 housing authorities in the country (including the nearby Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver housing authorities in Washington and Housing Authority of Portland in Oregon) is Moving to Work (MTW) status which it has had since 2003. MTW agencies have the flexibility to find new approaches that

- Reduce cost;
- Provide incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, seeking work, or participating in job training, educational programs, or other economic opportunity programs; and
- Increase housing choices for low-income families.

Each MTW housing authority has an agency-specific agreement with HUD, detailing the flexibilities granted in order to meet program goals. Each year, the housing authority completes an annual plan, to be approved by HUD, and an annual report on the outcomes achieved.

KCHA's MTW status is particularly important for the WFF Systems Initiative as it provides funding flexibility. KCHA's Public Housing Operating, Capital, and Section 8 program resources are combined into a single block-grant, allowing the housing authority to have more discretion in implementing programs. The housing authority can bend some of the housing rules to try more innovative programs and can use its reserves to meet local needs. In particular, for the past five years, KCHA has operated a Department of Homeless Initiatives funded through the MTW reserves. Originally started as a program under special projects, the Department now has 2.5 dedicated FTE staff. In addition to the director, there is a full-time program manager who handles contract management, execution, and reporting and a .5 FTE who operates as the assistant to oversee all project-based contracts, plus sponsor-based projects.

History of Involvement in Homelessness

KCHA's work with homeless and vulnerable individuals began in 1999 with a special project, the Housing Access and Services Program (HASP), to help non-elderly, disabled adults gain access to Section 8 Non-Elderly Disabled and Mainstream Housing Choice Vouchers. KCHA created a county-wide consortium of organizations that refers clients to KCHA to apply for housing vouchers to be referred to HASP. The consortium included providers of mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and AIDS services; the King County Veterans; and American Disabilities Services. Individuals must be prepared for independent or semi-independent living. Service-providing organizations that are part of the consortium may also provide services to individuals who they refer for the HASP. As of our February 2011 site visit, the county had 1,700 HASP vouchers, the largest number in the country. About half of these voucher holders are transitioning out of homelessness.

KCHA's first involvement in an initiative for homeless families was in 2005, working with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the Sound Families initiative. A \$40 million, seven year initiative launched in 2000, Sound Families was designed to triple the amount of transitional housing available for families in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The Foundation provided funding for services, and KCHA, along with other housing authorities in the Puget Sound area, provided operating assistance for

transitional housing units using project-based vouchers. Housing authorities accepted into their programs families enrolled in the Sound Families program and made agreements to prioritize these families on their Public Housing waitlist once they successfully completed the program. The Sound Families program continues to have a few projects coming online—two additional projects were scheduled to come online in 2011; however, service funding has come to an end for many existing contracts. The Sound Families Initiative encouraged a transition-in-place strategy allowing families to remain in the same housing complex once they finished receiving transitional housing services; however, most need ongoing rental assistance after participating in the program. To address this need, KCHA's Sound Families graduates may access the public housing waitlist, where one in three applicants referred into public housing comes from the Sound Families program.

In 2007, KCHA started its first sponsor-based program to house chronically homeless individuals coming off the streets. Using MTW flexibility, KCHA created a third type of rental subsidy that is available to sponsor agencies, allowing them to master lease units in the private market, and then sublet to their clients. This allows extremely hard to house homeless households access to housing when their rental, credit, and criminal histories may prevent them from being housed by private landlords. KCHA provides the rental subsidy and the contracted partner agencies, primarily behavioral health providers, provide intensive, community-based services. KCHA currently provides 142 rental subsidies through this program.

A recent program targeting homeless families is Passage Point. Launched in 2010, Passage Point provides transitional housing using project-based vouchers for up to 46 adults exiting the correctional system and reuniting with their children. Passage Point is a collaborative effort between YWCA, KCHA, King County, and various community members. Program participants are offered mental health and substance abuse counseling and treatment, case management, parenting classes, job training and job placement services, and children's services.

Services Provided

Federally Subsidized Housing. As of February 2011, KCHA owned or controlled 115 residential complexes with 8,468 units. Tables AII-1 and AII-2 detail KCHA's housing inventory of HUD subsidized housing and locally subsidized housing, respectively. KCHA's 3,200 units of federally (HUD) subsidized housing are available for individuals and families with the most limited incomes, including seniors, people with disabilities, single-parent households, and low-income working households. The 63 properties, located across the county (excluding Seattle and Renton) include high-rises for seniors and adults with disabilities, family apartment and townhome complexes and single-family houses. Public housing comprises the majority of the subsidized units.

Table AII-1. Overview of KCHA’s HUD-Subsidized Programs

HUD-Subsidized Programs	Number of Sites	Number of Units
Public Housing (families)	32	1,275
Public Housing (senior/disabled)	19	1,223
Public Housing (permanent supportive)	1	32
Section 8 (project-based) Properties	11	732
TOTAL	63	3,230

Locally Subsidized Housing. KCHA also operates over 5000 units of affordable or “workforce” housing. See Table AI-1. These programs serve low to moderate income households, as well as persons with special needs. The properties are managed by private property management firms and are typically financed with tax-exempt bonds or low income tax credits. In addition, KCHA operates four manufactured housing communities for older adults meeting age and income requirements who are interested in purchasing their own homes.

Table AII-2. KCHA’s Other Affordable Housing Programs

Local Programs	Number of Sites	Number of Units
Tax Credit Partnerships	17	1,953
Bond-Financed Housing	16	2,461
Non-profit Partnerships	11	136
Miscellaneous	4	29
Manufactured Housing	4	430
TOTAL	52	5,009

Housing Choice Vouchers. As of January 1, 2011, KCHA had a total of 8,221 housing choice vouchers (Section 8); however, the housing choice voucher waiting list had been closed since May 2007. In June 2011 the waitlist was reopened for two weeks and 2,500 applicants were placed on the waitlist. The tenant based vouchers, provided by HUD and managed by KCHA, provide subsidies to private landlords on behalf of qualifying low-income households. Approximately one-quarter of the vouchers are targeted to participants with special needs, including families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the separation, or imminent separation, of children from the family; disabled households; and homeless veterans. KCHA operates a number of these programs in partnership with community agencies. Supportive housing programs, for example are operated by various non-profit agencies and social service providers, but owned and maintained by KCHA. These programs offer housing and supportive services for homeless individuals and families and for people with special needs.

Other Programs. KCHA operates a number of other programs related to housing, including capital construction, home repair and weatherization, development financing, and resident services (through partnerships with local nonprofit agencies).

Gaps and Challenges

During the current economic crisis (i.e., the Great Recession and its ongoing impact on states) demand for KCHA programs and services increased. In June 2011, KCHA opened its Section 8 housing choice voucher waitlist for the first time since June 2007 and received a record number of applications. A total of 25,306 applications to the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program were received during the two-week period that the waitlist was open; this number of applications is double that of applications received when the waitlist was open in 2007. Of the 25,306 applications, 23,464 included children. Approximately ten percent (2,500) of applicants were selected through a lottery and placed on the waitlist.

While the demand for services has increased, the resources to provide those services are limited. HUD budgets have been cut in 2011 and the Washington State 2011-2013 budget experienced \$4 billion in cuts. The state also experienced an estimated \$500 million revenue shortfall. In February 2011 at the time of our visit, KCHA was preparing for the impact of budget cuts experienced by Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Cuts to entitlement programs (i.e., TANF, General Assistance for the Unemployable) were estimated to affect as much as 25 percent of KCHA public housing residents and Section 8 recipients.

KCHA staff expressed concerns regarding the future use of Sound Families units. As of our site visit in February 2011, service funding for most of the Sound Families units had expired and plans were in the making to use those units to provide housing to families identified by Department of Children and Families. Staff were concerned that Sound Families units would “smolder and go away.”

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Overall Involvement in the Systems Change Initiative

Both the KCHA Executive Director and the director of the Department of Homeless Initiatives participated in discussions concerning the development of the Systems Initiative, although they reported that there has been no strategic involvement of KCHA in the King County plan, *Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Preventing and Ending Family Homelessness*. As noted earlier, KCHA Executive Director has been a member of the King County Funders’ Group since its inception and stays abreast of developments in the Initiative, and staff from KCHA has been involved in the work groups on the alignment of shelters and coordinated entry.

Although not a direct part of the Initiative, KCHA, together with Building Changes and BMGF, has been working to seek service-based funding for the Sound Family units that remain, but for which the service funding has expired. In particular, KCHA and Building Changes have been working with the Children’s Administration to determine how to make the units available to families who are receiving child welfare

services. At the time of our February 2011 site visit, KCHA, along with the Seattle Housing Authority (also seeking funding for services linked to their Sound Family units) had an initial conversation with Children's Administration, and brought in Building Changes to help coordinate the effort. Just prior to our visit, 12 housing authorities in Washington, including KCHA, had coordinated with the Children's Administration to submit applications for additional Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. KCHA was subsequently awarded 24 new FUP vouchers.

Related Initiatives

KCHA also has other efforts underway that are relevant to the WFF Systems Initiative. With respect to prevention, for example, the agency operates a housing eviction prevention program that is a collaboration between the Housing Management and Resident Services divisions of KCHA. Property managers identify and refer to Resident Services tenants who they believe are at risk in their units. This program emerged from the concern that people are often evicted for small reasons. The agency was interested in exploring whether it could identify the families who may be at risk for eviction and assist them in staying in the units. Before the program was instituted, the eviction rate from over 3,500 public housing units supported by KCHA averaged 20 per month, but is now fewer than six households a year. The National Alliance to End Homelessness published a brief that described this program as a promising practice, and reported an estimated savings of \$3,550 for KCHA for each eviction prevented as a result of the program.

With respect to housing, the low prospects of getting new housing units due to a tight budget has caused KCHA to explore and experiment with other efforts that help people to move out of their units and free them up for additional families who are in need. For example, at the time of our visit, the agency was implementing a five year pilot of the Resident Opportunity Plan that aims to provide incentives to families that assist in their obtaining employment and becoming economically self-sufficient. In tandem with Rent Reform changes discussed below, KCHA's Resident Opportunity Plan will continue to encourage families to successfully graduate into market rate housing. This program, which was developed in partnership with the YWCA, Bellevue College, Hopelink, and Washington State's Department of Employment Security, will provide up to 100 households with intensive wrap-around services, financial assistance, and education services to help public housing residents increase their incomes and become self-sufficient. Participants in the Resident Opportunity Plan program receive services that support development of career plans, access to education and training, completion of school, and youth employment. Participants also have a savings account once they complete the program and graduate from a housing subsidy. The key challenge KCHA faces is achieving successful graduation for families living in public housing and Section 8 housing in such difficult economic times when employment is difficult to obtain. Moreover, some families, such as immigrant families, face additional barriers that compound their difficulties in leaving.

At the time of our visit, KCHA also was revamping its rent structure to increase the ceiling rent that could be paid in the housing. Prior to the change, rents would hit a ceiling when an income hit a certain point and would stay at that level even if the family's income continued to climb. Consequently, staff indicated that there were about 100 families in their housing who had high incomes but stayed in public housing because of the ceiling rents. As part of their Rent Reform plans, KCHA was working on phasing

out the ceiling rent, recognizing that it will likely lose some of the economic mix of families in their complexes, but it would also gain additional public housing units for extremely low income families.

Next Steps

This initial document provides a baseline summary of the KCHA. Annual site visits will inform the next report and help to highlight organizational changes that have occurred as a result of the Washington Families Fund Systems Change Initiative. The organization's progress in implementing changes based on the five pillars—coordinated entry, prevention, rapid housing, tailored services, and economic opportunity—will be the focus of coming case studies.

Appendix II-C: Catholic Community Services Organizational Case Study Pierce County

Overview

Catholic Community Services is a resource for homeless families in Pierce County, Washington. It provides a multitude of services for all families and individuals with the aim of providing for most all of their social service needs, including housing. Catholic Community Services staff provide these services directly and indirectly to their clients. The organization serves as the orchestrator of services that clients receive from their staff as well as services they receive from staff at other local agencies.

Catholic Community Services' part in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative is an important one given its role in the Pierce community to provide services to house homeless families. It has a long-standing commitment to serve these families' diverse needs, and most importantly, to facilitate getting them housed. The organization is a key player in the community and is well known by other community-based organizations as a stakeholder committed to reducing homelessness in Pierce County. Given the numbers of families it works with, it is an important organization to follow during this systems change initiative. Catholic Community Services' history in this region of the state, its commitment to reducing homelessness, the diversity of services it offers, and its experiences developing systems to serve the homeless population make it an ideal candidate for the organizational case study. Understanding Catholic Community Services' experiences with the systems change will be informative to the evaluation.

This organizational case study incorporates a description of Catholic Community Services' Phoenix Housing Network (PHN) program and support services, including an organizational profile, and discusses collaborations with other organizations; funding sources; target populations, including statistics on those it serves; housing services provided to clients; and staffing. The study also incorporates a section on the systems change initiative, both planning and implementation, and provides the families' perspectives on the services they received from Catholic Community Services' PHN. This document closes with a section on next steps in the case study process.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

Catholic Community Services (CCS) is a community-based organization with a long-standing history of providing housing services in Washington State. The organization began providing services in 1918 when, as the Seattle Council of Catholic Women, it provided homes for orphaned and abandoned children. By 1990, and after many changes within the organizational leadership and home base, the organization changed its name to Catholic Community Services. Since then, many community-based

satellite facilities have sprung up in the state to provide services, including some in Pierce County. One of these community-based facilities is the Tahoma Family Center.

The Tahoma Family Center, in Pierce County's city of Tacoma, is a unit within the Catholic Community Services organization that serves as a hub for more than 25 different programs. One of these programs is the Phoenix Housing Network, whose target population is families. PHN started as a small shelter program modeled after one in New Jersey where churches came together to house homeless families in a shelter setting. The program started in Tacoma in 1996 when Catholic Community Services was contacted by Associated Ministries to be one of the program sites. Catholic Community Services identified a church to provide shelter to homeless families. The program became known as the Phoenix Housing Network and remains connected to the Tahoma Family Center. In 1997, it started adding transitional housing to the array of services offered to families in the program. The initial funding began with some HUD contracts, and staff worked with community landlords and the housing authority to identify housing options. The program subcontracted on a couple of Sound Families projects; the most recent program expansion was another Sound Families project in downtown Tacoma. Currently, there are seven transitional housing (TH) programs serving about 100 families, and five families are still in shelters (as of February 2011).

The mission of PHN follows:

Through support, dignity and love, Phoenix Housing Network, in partnership with our community, empowers families at risk of homelessness to achieve independent, healthy lives and a permanent place to call home.

PHN provides services to only families in the shelter and housing program. Staff work with these families and monitor their progress towards obtaining permanent housing. The monitoring process allows them to see easily that the families are working on their plans to obtain permanent housing.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

PHN has 14 staff; nine are case managers. Each case manager has an average caseload of 15 clients. Staffing is stable at the Center. There is no issue with staff turnover.

Staff training and development are important to Catholic Community Services. Staff receive different types of job training to help them with job performance. Some trainings are one-on-one and others are in group settings. Clinical staff receive one-on-one professional training from the lead clinician to hone their clinical skills. Staff also receive on-the-job training from their peers. They shadow their peers as they work with clients. In addition, staff are trained on the Catholic Community Services' mission and philosophy and are trained on ethnic diversity to better work with and serve their clients.

Collaboration with Other Organizations

PHN collaborates with many other agencies in Tacoma and the broader Pierce County community. The collaboration is centered on providing services to homeless families. PHN serves as the organization that coordinates client services, working with other agencies to deliver unduplicated and integrated services into the package of services that clients receive. Partnerships with other agencies include Goodwill, Tacoma Community House, and the Tacoma Rescue Mission.

Funding

PHN receives most of its funding through grants that come from a variety of sources including federal, state, and local government.

Target Population and Clients Served

PHN serves families with minor children. The average age of the adults is approximately 25 to 30 years. The adults are typically mothers, but recently there have been more single fathers seeking services. PHN serves 25 families in a year in shelters and 90 to 100 in transitional housing. Families can stay up to two years in the housing. Right now, though, they will have a hard time getting Section 8 vouchers to pay rent. The lines are not as clear now on the length of time families can stay in the housing. When the new permanent housing facility, Guadalupe/Vista, opens there will be no time limit on how long the family can stay.

Case managers report that families come to the Tahoma Family Center on their own or from a shelter seeking assistance. Most families enter the program from the street, shelters, or doubled-up situations. Once they reach the program, whether they receive services depends on where the openings are. If the families meet the eligibility requirements for the different programs, then staff are able to find housing for them.

All families must go through an intake process prior to enrolling in the program. The process includes a packet of instruments used to collect information on the families, and staff ask a series of questions to determine the programs for which program the families are eligible.

Families are screened for specific criminal offenses, for example, offenses that are violent or sexual in nature. Families are screened carefully because most of the housing is not owned by Tahoma Family Center, and PHN wants to be extremely careful about the tenants.

Families are also screened for substance abuse. They need to be clean and sober while in the program. Staff conduct urine screens before families are allowed to enter the program, and they are conducted while families are in the program. If someone has a positive screen while in the program, he or she will need to do a follow-up drug/alcohol screen and may be referred to a private agency for treatment services. In addition, the person may be required to attend 30 days of Alcohol Anonymous (AA) meetings. If the person fails to remain clean, he or she is referred to an in-patient program. If the person chooses not to enroll, he or she will not be allowed to remain in the program.

Housing Services Provided

Once a family enters the program, staff prepare a service plan and work with the family to meet their goals. In addition to housing goals, these may include medical/health and employment goals. Families and staff revisit the goals every 90 days to check progress and determine if adjustments need to be made. In addition to goal setting, staff conduct strengths assessments with families. This allows the families to recognize what their strengths are and where they need to improve.

The staff meet with families weekly for the first several months of the program; the meetings then taper off as the family stabilizes. Staff provide case management services based on family need. Parenting, budgeting, and nutrition classes are not required, but the program does require that families work on something productive for 40 hours a week.

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Planning

Catholic Community Services' PHN staff have been involved with the Washington Family Fund Systems Initiative through their participation in the Homeless Coalition and Continuum of Care meetings. They were part of the City/County Pilot for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) program and part of the original centralized intake system.

Catholic Community Services' PHN staff gave a lot of thought to the Initiative early on and made a bid on the prevention grant. They were involved in some of the grant meetings during the early stages of the Initiative, which also involved county planning for centralized intake. They also became somewhat involved with the planning of the Initiative through their involvement with the Homeless Coalition.

Implementation

Coordinated Entry/Centralized Assessment, Intake, and Tracking. Today PHN is one of the providers that participates in and receives intakes from the centralized intake system. Several PHN staff have been included in the trainings on how to use the new system. Based on firsthand knowledge of system operations as a user of the system, PHN reported that the centralized intake system was overwhelmed when it became operational on January 31, 2011. It was difficult to get referrals from the system. PHN had three intake openings to fill and ended up working outside the system to get the slots filled.

Once the system opened up a little and there was less of a bottleneck in the process, PHN started to get referrals from the centralized intake system. Not only was this process a change for PHN, but the number of referrals was also not what the staff were accustomed to receiving; they recently received three referrals from the new system when in the past with the previous system they would get four to

five walk-ins a week. Not all of the walk-ins were served, but those that were not were put on a wait list to receive services.

PHN realized that it needed to make sure that it was communicating to Associated Ministries about the number of openings it had and to give them accurate information to get the referrals they needed. One thing that the organization needs to do is to update its profile. The one it is using is from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database, and Associated Ministries has asked all providers, to update their profiles so that they can use them to send the providers the appropriate families.

The PHN staff are not sure how the new centralized intake process will affect its operations, but they are going into it with an open mind. If things do not work, then they will let Associated Ministries know what their issues are with the system. Staff indicated that one of the good things about their community is that they speak with one another; the lines of communication are open.

PHN's staff think that the new systems will positively affect families. Staff hope that families will not have to go from place to place to obtain the services they need or get the right information. Staff realize that they need to be patient with the new system.

Prior to the centralized intake process, PHN maximized the number of families it brought through its intake process to make sure the housing units were full. With the new process, it is difficult to know when the clients would come through the system for services. With the old process, people came in every Monday seeking services. This would not continue with the new centralized intake process; all clients will have to go through intake at Associated Ministries. There will probably not be a crowded lobby every Monday morning with families who show up hoping to get services. PHN expects that the centralized intake system can and will triage people effectively. Proper triaging would be a great help to the families and to Catholic Community Services.

Even with the new process that occurs at Associated Ministries, staff will still need to conduct an intake process onsite in order to have information to conduct a background check on the family.

Prevention. It is a strategic approach for PHN to be involved with prevention funding. The Network is interested in exploring ways to prevent homelessness and submitted an application for the prevention funds. The staff felt that their experience through the work that they have done supported their desire for future work in this area. They think that they may not have gotten the prevention grant because the grantors liked having centralized intake and prevention under one roof so that some families could be diverted from shelters. At this time PHN does prevention by taking the first eight phone calls it receives in a month. Staff conduct a needs assessment of those families and direct them to the resources they need.

PHN conducted an HPRP program for the past year and gained a lot of experience with delivering those services. PHN also received a grant from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to do homeless prevention with veterans. Staff felt that through these grants and the services they typically provide that

their expertise in this area has grown considerably. PHN's priority is to expand prevention services for veterans even though they have not seen a lot of veterans' families. It is collaborating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) now on some activities involving homeless veterans. Though Phoenix Housing Network has always served veterans' families, it now has new resources targeted towards these families. There now seem to be more 21-year-olds coming home from the war in Iraq who have families and need services.

PHN identified a number of challenges relating to prevention. First, a full and complete assessment is needed to really examine the family's situation and make the proper program plan. The second challenge is measuring outcomes. HUD has not been clear on what the desirable outcomes are for prevention. For the HPRP prevention component, PHN pays the clients' rent and provide a 90-day service that could have been extended. However, it was found that this is not enough help for most people; they need more. The HPRP referrals come through Associated Ministries.

Rapid Housing/Housing. The rapid housing resources that are currently available for families are provided through HUD's HPRP, although PHN does not provide the rapid housing services through HPRP. They did just begin providing these services for the veterans' population.

PHN has found that landlords are more willing to work with them on their current transitional housing (TH) programs than before. In particular, landlords are more willing to work with them if they provide support services to families, especially for clients with criminal backgrounds. Staff have found that, with some families, it is helpful for PHN to be on their lease to ease the anxieties of the landlords.

PHN staff feel that they could use more resources such as more affordable housing in their communities. There is more housing in the community now than before, but it consists of condominiums, which often are not affordable to the clientele.

Tailored and Mainstream Services. PHN had some involvement through the Homeless Coalition with planning or other activities associated with the tailoring and mainstreaming of services to families. But these activities were already values and practices of the agency. For example, PHN has been involved with training homeless service providers in motivational interviewing. Case manager training enables them to provide better services to the families. Case managers physically move families when needed. A truck goes to the furniture bank and storage units and hauls furniture for the families. The case managers work on the families' plans and help them make goals and meet the goals.

The level of case management provided by the case managers to their clients depends on their level of functioning. If they are low functioning, they will get more help with things such as filling out applications. Staff are required to see the families weekly and to check in with them. Staff inspect the units on a monthly basis and have a review with the families at 30, 60, and 90 days.

Economic Development. The organization works with the Workforce Development Council (WDC) whose mission is to support self-efficiency and close workforce gaps (<http://www.seekingwdc.org>), and

has helped to enroll families in their certified nurse aide (CNA) grant programs. PHN has also partnered with Tacoma Goodwill on other grants through the Washington Families Fund activities. Staff send families to DSHS or to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), but the agencies do not know where the families come from (DSHS or EOC); consequently, they do not know that they came from PHN.

Data/HMIS/Evaluation. The PHN actively participates in the HMIS, using it not just for the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative data but to satisfy other program data requirements as well. Staff have seen improvements in the system in the last two years. Staff have had to be more thorough with their HMIS input, paying more attention to data quality. In addition, more staff have been trained in HMIS in the last two years, increasing the number of staff who are eligible to enter data and run reports. In order to provide better services to HMIS users, Pierce County recently hired an HMIS trainer. This person is available to train staff in the various agencies that use the system.

With the centralized intake process, Associated Ministries starts the data entry with families. Once the families are entered into the system, then Associated Ministries makes the records available to PHN. What initially appears as a closed system, that is, the records are not available to PHA, is only closed until Associated Ministries gives PHN access to the records. Some of the providers have concerns about confidentiality within the centralized intake system. Staff have heard rumors about agencies being able to see other agencies' confidential information. PHN also had some issues with the closed system with the HPRP pilot, but most of those issues have been worked out.

With regard to data reports, staff have outcome reports that they use on a routine basis to make decisions about the program. They use the reports to look at how families are progressing and to determine if they are meeting their individualized goals.

Catholic Community Services is making some changes to data system to make the reports uniform. This agency is in conversations with Pierce County to make its system compatible with HMIS. There are data points that the PHN is interested in tracking more effectively, including employment.

One challenge PHN faces is the reporting requirements of the different funding sources. Each funding source requires its own unique report and PHN has to generate these reports often using multiple data sources. It is inefficient to have to go through the same data sources multiple times pulling data for each report. Having compatible systems will help them to retrieve data more effectively.

Family Perspective of the Homeless Service System

Eight families participated in the client focus group: five women, two men, and one couple. The ages of the children in these families ranged from 2 months to 18 years. The families have been in the program from two months to one year.

There were different ways in which the participants were put in touch with PHN. They were referred either through a personal contact with a relative, friend, case manager, church, or school personnel, or by calling 211. For these families, it took from a couple of days to approximately two months to get into the program. Some families waited a while before they were able to get housing; one family reported calling every shelter every day for two months before finding a place to live. Most clients had to call and apply to multiple places before they were successful in finding somewhere to stay.

Many of the clients stayed at different places before coming to PHN. Some of them lived on the streets, in hotels or motels, stayed in churches for a week at a time, couch-surfed with friends and relatives, and cycled in and out of temporary places. One went straight from a home to this program without being in any other temporary housing. One family reported that this program was the only one that allowed them to go straight to transitional housing.

The program has given the families assistance in a number of different areas including transportation, provisions during Christmas holidays, getting a driver's license and car insurance, therapy services for children, clothing to wear during job interviews, and providing extracurricular activity for their children.

Some clients indicated that there were services they would like or had difficulty getting. One such difficulty is the Transitional Housing, Operating and Rent Assistance (THORA) Program. Clients cannot go back to school because of the THORA program; it affects their benefits. With regards to transportation, they would prefer to get bus passes, which provide more flexibility than bus tickets, but they tend to get the tickets. Car insurance is often challenging. Not having car insurance automatically disqualifies them from applying for certain jobs. They also find that their food stamps are insufficient.

In terms of prevention and what could be done to prevent someone from becoming homeless, the clients reported that assistance with rent payments would be useful. Sometimes they were unable to come up with their rent on time, but DSHS needed to see an eviction notice before it would help. Also, if they are seasonal workers, they need a few months of assistance during the year to keep their housing. Another issue is foreclosure programs; one participant reported that none of Obama's foreclosure programs were helpful; it is possible for people to slip through the cracks. Others reported that prevention is not always possible; sometimes there are unforeseen events that occur that are unavoidable. One additional comment about prevention is the ability to save for a rainy day; that would help keep one from becoming homeless.

With regards to PHN staff, clients reported that the staff are fantastic. They also reported that they received excellent support for their children.

Challenges and Gaps

The Phoenix Housing Network staff are generally open to the systems initiative. There was some initial concern over the details of how the centralized intake would actually work. With the passage of time though, staff seem to be cautiously optimistic about the initiative.

In regards to the organizational climate, the most obvious change is that they do not allow drop-in intakes any longer. In addition, staff have also changed how they talk to people initially when they call the agency on the phone asking for help. Staff are a little more reserved since families are to go through the centralized intake process prior to coming to the Tahoma Family Center.

The initiative has not changed how Phoenix Housing Network prioritizes its work. Their prevention activities have been planned for quite a few years and they are continuing to move forward with them. The Washington Family Fund initiative and HPRP have given Phoenix Housing Network the opportunity to fulfill those goals.

There is some potential for undesired results. Staff worry about families being “caught in a run-around.” They have to trust that centralized intake is sending them families that are appropriate to their program. If that does not happen, Phoenix Housing Network will have to send people back to centralized intake and that would be unfortunate. For example, denial of services could happen because centralized intake does not do criminal background checks and criminal history is an eligibility criterion for the Phoenix Housing Network.

Next Steps

The next steps in the process for the organizational case studies are to conduct follow-up interviews with the organizations to determine the status of their involvement with the Initiative, the degree of implementation at their sites, any impacts from the systems change, and any unanticipated changes that have occurred as a result of implementation.

Appendix II-D: Tacoma Public Schools Tone Resource Center Organizational Case Study Pierce County

Overview

The Tone Resource Center identifies students in the Tacoma Public School System who are currently homeless and works to provide a variety of resources to meet the needs of those students. Entering its 10th year in operation in 2012, the Tone Resource Center operates under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, which stipulates that children meeting the Act's definition of homelessness can be provided transportation as needed to attend their school of origin. In addition, the program provides a range of supports and services to these children and their families that are often not found in other communities. The program was chosen as an organization to highlight and follow over the course of the Washington Families Fund Initiative because of the unique role it plays, its prominence locally, and the potential for providing guidance for other communities.

This summary begins with a profile of the organization, including a brief description of its history, current role, and capacity. Detail on the identification process of children, including the numbers and circumstances of children identified, is then provided, followed by descriptions of the services provided. A summary of family perceptions of the services, gathered through a focus group of families in the school system, is then presented, followed by a description of the gaps and challenges in the program, and their role in the Initiative to date.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

The Tone Resource Center within the Tacoma Public School System began in 2002 with the Congressional reauthorization of the McKinney Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program. Reauthorized as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act as part of the No Child Left Behind Legislation (P.L. 107-110), the Act mandated that school districts appoint a liaison whose role is to ensure that children and youth meeting the Act's homeless definition: are identified and have access to immediate enrollment in the district schools; are not separated from the mainstream school environment on the basis of their homelessness; and are informed of their rights to comparable services (including transportation to and from the child's school of origin, as well as special education and gifted and talented services, etc.). In addition, part of the McKinney-Vento liaison role is to identify and remove barriers that may cause difficulties in the educational success of homeless children and youths.

The Tone Resource Center grew out of the Tone School (where it continues to be located). This school was one of the longest operating schools for homeless children, having been established in 1997. The

school had operated for grades K through eight and Head Start with a staff of 12, including teachers, a school nurse, counselors, and outreach workers. During the final year it was open, the school served approximately 400 students over the course of the year and up to 50 children a day.

As stipulated in the Act, the school system hired a McKinney-Vento liaison to coordinate transportation and other services for homeless students. The position was filled by the individual who had served as the Tone School nurse since 1988. The funding through the Act paid for half of her salary, and the other half was covered by Title I funds. Title I funds also supported a peer educator and, for the last two years, have supported a full-time high school liaison who rotates through seven high schools and associated programs.

Several years into the program, the Tone staff were experiencing difficulties in managing the effort across the entire school system. They were arranging all the transportation and other supports but not getting the necessary buy-in from the individual schools. Based on an assessment of the program, the state McKinney-Vento coordinator recommended that the program adopt a more decentralized model in which a key coordinating contact is designated by each school's principal. These contacts are employees of the school, typically guidance counselors, but also include office professionals, a nurse, and some vice principals. The Tone staff try to train the building staff each year, especially those new to the role. Tone staff report that the decentralization has been a "work in progress" and is only as good as the person filling the role. The building contact role is an additional duty for the employee and can be very time consuming. These contacts are responsible for completing the intakes with families, as well as forms for free lunches and clothing. Every month, the Tone staff send a list of students to the building principal and building contact person. This list includes every child who is McKinney-Vento-eligible, along with a cover sheet reminder that each child is eligible for Title I services (e.g., remedial learning).

Identification of Eligible Families

Since From September through April 2011, 1,306 students were identified as homeless, running at a rate of approximately 60 more than the previous school year. In March alone, 92 students were identified. Only 12 percent of the students (151) identified as homeless were new to Tacoma Public Schools. The table below provides a more detailed description of the grade level and housing status of the students identified.

Students Identified for McKinney-Vento (9/11- 4/11)	Total number of children: 1,306
Grade Level	
Early Childhood Education	4% (54)
Elementary	47% (616)
Middle	18% (233)
High School	23% (297)
Unavailable	8% (106)
Housing (at the point of identification)	
Shelters	18% (237)
Transitional housing	13% (171)
Motel	5% (70)
Doubled-up	38% (502)
Eviction prevention	<1% (3)
Foster care-temporary	8% (98)
Temporary placement	9% (115)
Unaccompanied youth	8% (100)
Other (unsheltered, care, etc.)	1% (10)

As can be seen, half of the students identified as homeless are attending elementary school or receiving childhood education, and about 40 percent are in the higher grades. Consistent with the definition of homelessness used by McKinney-Vento, the students come from a broad range of housing arrangements. The single largest percentage (38%) is living in doubled-up situations at the time of identification. A similarly large percentage (31%) is living with their families in a housing program provided by the system—shelter or transitional housing. An additional five percent are staying in a motel, either through the system or with the family’s own resources. Approximately a quarter of the children appear to be living away from their families, in temporary placements, in foster care, or on their own as unaccompanied minors.

Children are often identified as meeting McKinney-Vento homeless criteria through shelters. Every shelter and transitional housing program has the McKinney-Vento intake forms. Each identified family is asked to complete a form that asks for background information, their needs for uniforms, and their needs for supplies. The McKinney-Vento liaison is at each of the shelters at least once a week to check on who has moved in, who has left, and whether there are any issues or concerns with the schools that need to be addressed. Increasingly, as ties with the building contacts are strengthened, children are being identified as being eligible for McKinney-Vento at the schools. For example, if a child is missing a great deal of school, the building contact may inquire and find out that the problem has to do with a family’s move to a shelter. Families also can be identified by food services if they check “homeless” on the free and reduced lunch form.

Typically, families do not come forward themselves to let the school know they are homeless unless they are aware of the transportation that can be provided or are very desperate for help. High school students are an exception, however, and are reportedly often self-referring. The program notes that they have students that are unaccompanied youth (not in the custody of a parent, in a temporary situation) who are often in many situations—most common are couch surfing, handed off from one person to another. The staff also report instances in which a child may be alone because he or she has a parent who died. There are enrollment issues in the high school, especially if a student has any type of disciplinary background.

Families also are identified through word of mouth at the high school level, with children in the program telling other children in need about it and families doing the same at other grade levels. The staff report that a fair number of families are repeat clients.

Finally, to encourage communication especially at the high school level, each school has a Facebook page, and the high school liaison has added texting to her work phone.

Services Provided

There are two parts to the program:

- The federally regulated component involving the identification of students in the school district who meet the federal McKinney-Vento definition of homeless and who are entitled to transportation to their school of origin; and
- The community-based portion, the Tone Resource Center.

Transportation

Staff believe that homeless children come to the attention of the program and the school system primarily because they are having trouble getting to school. In the initial years of the program, the McKinney-Vento liaison coordinated all the transportation for the students identified under the Act. In the past few years, the program has been trying to have the individual schools maintain the children within their building and to set up the transportation for their students. If a family contacts the McKinney-Vento liaison first, she or he sets up the initial contact, then has the school provide the services.

Data from 2006 indicated that the transportation costs can be high, with roughly \$400,000 a year covering these expenses. The options provided include using the Tacoma School District bus system, purchasing bus passes from Pierce Transit for high school students, reimbursing personal mileage costs, and, when needed, brokering student transportation with qualified providers in the community.

One of the key challenges noted with transportation is the need to be flexible and respond to the changes in children's individual living situations. Transportation plans can change weekly as families move to different living arrangements.

Other McKinney-Vento Program Services

Aside from transportation, several other mainstream services are offered to eligible students through the McKinney-Vento program. On the program's one-page intake form, students and their parents may indicate the specific services they need or desire. Students who request assistance are provided free breakfast and lunch during the school year and are referred to other sources throughout the community for meals over the summer.

Counseling, medical coupons, medical/dental referrals, vision referrals, and Medicaid/Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) services are also provided through the McKinney-Vento program. Students may request important records, including missing enrollment records, a birth certificate, immunization/medical records, prior academic records, or guardianship records and are linked to Title I-related services, such as tutoring, Special Education, gifted/talented classes, and LEP/bilingual resources.

If students wish, they can be linked to after-school programs, a Teen Center, vocational/technical training, and other community resources through the McKinney-Vento program.

Tone Resource Center

Every student is eligible to request uniforms, shoes, and coats. The program provides uniforms to those in need (most schools other than high school require uniforms) and school supplies. Most school supplies are donated by the community. Clothing, often new clothing, also is donated. The program's Trust Fund allows them to purchase uniforms, new clothing, and shoes. In addition, high school students are provided funds as needed to pay for their cap and gown, ID cards, and other items and fees pertaining to graduation. This year those funds have helped close to 40 McKinney-Vento students with graduation expenses.

The Tone Resource Center relies on community support through donations. The program does not do any active solicitation or campaigns to encourage donations. The staff report that many of the same organizations continue to donate each year.

A unique donation comes through Project SAVE, operated by the University of Puget Sound. Each year at graduation time, the school found that its dumpsters were full of clothing and dorm items that students did not want to take home. The school started a program at the end of the year in which they provide all dorms, fraternities, and sororities with big bags to donate items they do not want. The school then organizes a large group of volunteers to sort through the donated items, and a local laundry launders all

the clothing and bedding. This year, more than 600 bags were distributed. The staff reported that through this effort they obtain a lot of clothing for their teen bank, as well as bedding and small appliances that can be used by the shelters.

For 14 of the schools, a local food bank is working with the program to operate a “backpack” program that provides weekend food for several hundred children. A backpack filled with food such as fruit, snacks, nutrition bars, and juice goes home with a child on Friday. The child returns the backpack on Monday and it is refilled at the end of the week. It is up to each school to identify the children who need this resource.

The Tone Resource Center is often a recipient of large donations that it tries to distribute through its existing channels. For example, it recently received eight large pallets of backpacks and school supplies, as well as three large pallets of snack packs. The program shared these resources with the backpack program.

For the high schools, Youth Resources provides a grant that was used this year to purchase hygiene items. Teens would just have to show up, no questions asked, sign their first names, and write down what they took.

Family Perspective of the Homeless Families System

A focus group was conducted with the mothers of six families who had children in the school system and had been connected with Tone Resource Center. Each of the families had multiple children, in all levels of the school system. Four of the families were from the greater Seattle area, two had recently moved into the area—one within the last month, the other a few years ago. All were staying at the Tacoma Rescue Mission and had been there from as little as a week to about six weeks. Most had been there about two weeks.

Most of the families had found shelter through different outlets, such as through one’s church, by going to DSHS, and calling 211. The reasons for needing shelter varied. One family faced eviction and then went through its remaining resources, living with relatives, and paying for a hotel with their tax refund. Another family came from California after the father lost his job. They decided to go north and landed in the Seattle area. They chose Tacoma as it was relatively less expensive. Another family had their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cut off, stayed with their sister for a few weeks, while calling 211 and calling the Tacoma Rescue Mission for about a month, before they could enter shelter. The family received the number from Associated Ministries.

All of the mothers spoke of receiving services through the school system and Tone Resource Center. One mother who had come from California noted that, by the time her daughter entered the school, the school already knew they were staying in a hotel but were very discreet about helping them. The school had the family complete paperwork and then the Tone staff called her and provided a uniform,

toiletries, school supplies, and new clothes. The mother noted that she received a lot more than she had expected. Others in the group reported receiving similar goods and remarked that most were brand new or "like new." They also remarked about the transportation that was provided and the access that made it easy to have their children go to the school of their choosing. When asked about access to food, they said that the shelter provides food and that during the summer almost every park in the area provides breakfast and lunch for the children.

Among unmet needs, employment and ready access to jobs were noted most commonly. For example, one woman wondered why the shelters could not bring employers or employment services to the shelter so they could have a one-stop-shop and not have to use bus fare and resources for gas. They also noted the need for competent day care facilities, gas vouchers or bus fare, and housing. One person commented that, although they are signing up with Associated Ministries for housing and housing resources, it might make more sense to get connected with education and employment first, and then housing.

Other struggles noted included having a child with special needs who cannot go to day care because of behavioral issues. The child receives services for occupational therapy, speech, and behavior and qualifies for door-to-door services. Another mother noted that she also had a child with special behavioral needs and is working on receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) now. The school system is working with her to make sure she receives the services she needs.

Families reported waiting in long lines for health services and discussed the difficulties in getting vision and dental care, especially with the cuts to Medicaid. Families noted that they now are going to the emergency room more for services, especially with dental issues, such as abscesses. The cuts to Medicaid in general were noted often. Finally, they noted the difficulties in learning what services were available and could meet their needs. They did not feel as though they always had the opportunity to use the resources that were available. DSHS, once thought of a place where there were told about resources, now is viewed as much more streamlined. They noted that, before families would sit down and talk to someone; now they are seen at a window.

Challenges and Gaps

The program would like to establish an integrated, seamless, one-stop shop for families' basic needs. Staff also noted the need for an outreach component for unaccompanied youth, as well as other programs for youth under 18.

The program also does not operate in the summer, which is viewed as a disadvantage. The high school liaison tries to set up students for summer school and internships, and there are many summer eating programs for children in the parks. Staff indicate that a bridge between the school year and the summer would be helpful.

One of the program's challenges is getting families to understand their rights. The program loses children each year through the families' movements. There is a concern that families do not understand that they can continue to get benefits throughout the year, even if they move. The staff conduct an ongoing process of training and clarifying the system and families' rights with their contacts at the building level, but there can be unevenness in the communication with families across schools.

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Program staff have been involved in the development of the Pierce County Plan to End Family Homelessness, the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative. Given the nascent form of the Initiative, the program has not been directly affected by the Initiative to date but has played a role in its development.

The McKinney-Vento liaison has served on the committee that worked on centralized intake and the high school liaison is on the economic committee. Staff also have become more involved in other community efforts now that they have the building contacts conducting much of the day-to-day work with individual children and families. For example, the director attends the coalition for the homeless meetings, and the high school liaison attends the coalition for homeless youth. The youth coalition is looking to bolster both housing and services for homeless youth.

Appendix II-E: Snohomish County YWCA Organizational Case Study Snohomish County

Overview

The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) of Snohomish County has been a leader in providing self-sufficiency-promoting services to women and families throughout the county since the 1960s. With a foundation in empowerment, the YWCA is home to services and advocacy efforts that address poverty, violence, and discrimination and provide a vehicle for families’ long-term independence. The organization provides emergency shelter and transitional and permanent housing, along with a host of preventive and supportive services, such as mental health services, domestic violence services, and employment services.

The YWCA was chosen as an organization to highlight and follow over the course of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative due to its prominence both locally and nationally. The YWCA’s participation in the Washington Families Fund Initiative will provide an opportunity to understand if and how the Initiative affects work and services at a large multiservice organization. The purpose of the organizational case studies is to gather information from organizations that provide housing and services in the three demonstration counties to understand how the Initiative is being implemented; the role that the organizations are playing in the Initiative; what, if any, impact the Initiative is having on organizations; and the changes the organizations are experiencing due to the Initiative, other changes in the system, and other environmental and contextual factors. These organizational case studies will be conducted annually as a part of the systems study component.

The case study begins with a profile of the organization that provides an overview of its history, current programs and support services, collaboration with other organizations, resources, target population, housing services provided, and staffing. Second, the case study addresses the organization’s role in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative, including the planning and implementation of the Initiative, and families’ perceptions of service receipt from the organization. The summary concludes with a discussion of next steps in the case study process.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

The Seattle YWCA, established in 1894 by a group of 28 women, began as a lounge and cafeteria to help working women attain self-sufficiency. The organization convened various interest- and culture-based clubs to help young women maintain focus on the “best things” and prevent distraction by “questionable amusements.” In 1914 the regional headquarters building was built in downtown Seattle. The organization expanded in 1919 to include additional branches in King County to provide social,

educational, and employment programs to a broader range of women. The YWCA has operated in King County for about 100 years working to advance the quality of life for all women and their families by providing services and advocacy tailored to the needs and cultural diversity of its community. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the YWCA began focusing more on issues of housing and homelessness. It developed both emergency shelter and permanent housing units for low-income women and families.

As it began to acquire and build additional permanent housing units for low-income women and families, the YWCA opened a regional service center in Snohomish to serve a broader range of families. In addition to emergency shelter and housing, the Snohomish County facility provides employment services, counseling, and family services.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

The YWCA of Snohomish County owns and operates two emergency shelter programs, eight transitional housing programs, three permanent supportive housing programs, and four permanent housing programs. The emergency shelter programs include five units of emergency shelter and an additional three motel vouchers per month. The organization has a total of 82 transitional housing units, 73 units of permanent supportive housing, and 225 units of permanent housing. There are 12 case managers on staff to provide case management services to participants of YWCA housing programs. Details for each program and type of housing are shown in the following table.

Housing Program	Housing Type	Number of Units
Emergency Shelter		8
Homeward Bound	Pathways	5
Motel Voucher	FEMA/ESAP Vouchers	3 vouchers/month
Transitional Housing		82
Homeward Bound	Pathways	8
Project Reunite	EHA Project-Based Voucher	8
Family Tree Apartments	EHA Project-Based Voucher	8
Edmonds Highlands	HASCO Project-Based Voucher	12
THOR Program	Scattered Site Leasing	5
Trinity Place	HASCO Project-Based Voucher	22
East Terrace	HASCO Project-Based Voucher	7
Fairview	HASCO Project-Based Voucher	12
Supportive Permanent Housing		73
Shelter Plus Care	Section 8	12
PSH Sound Families	HASCO Project-Based Voucher	48
SHP Chronic - Single	SHP	13
Permanent Housing		225
Homeward Bound	Section 8	5
Victorian Woods	Section 8	66
Somerset Village	Section 8	64
Wear to Live	Section 8	90

Collaboration with Other Organizations

The YWCA collaborates with multiple organizations to provide a wide range of services to its housing program participants. The YWCA partners with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County and Everett Housing Authority to provide housing units to families in the transitional and permanent housing programs. It works with Snohomish County Legal Services to provide legal assistance. The YWCA has developed partnerships with Evergreen Manor, Bridgeways, and Compass Health for chemical dependency and mental health treatment. It also collaborates with Volunteers of America, Housing Hope, and Catholic Community Services for additional services.

Funding

The YWCA had a total income of more than \$32 million in 2009. It is primarily funded by public dollars, with more than half of its income source in 2009 being fees and grants from government agencies. As part of this public funding, the YWCA received Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds to provide motel vouchers and rental assistance to its clients. It also received philanthropic and community support of more than \$7 million from the United Way and other contributors. Other sources of income for 2009 include program services fees and investment income, totaling more than \$5 million.

Target Population and Clients Served

The YWCA serves families from throughout Snohomish County. With the exception of 13 supportive permanent housing units, all of its emergency shelter and housing units are open to mothers with children under the age of 18.

Housing Services Provided

The YWCA provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing for families.

Emergency Shelter. Pathways for Women operates the Homeward Bound Shelter in Lynnwood, Washington. This facility provides emergency shelter for five women with children under the age of 18. Families can stay in the Homeward Bound Shelter for up to three months. The YWCA also operates a motel voucher program with FEMA/Emergency Shelter Assistance Program (ESAP) funding. This program provides motel vouchers to homeless families (i.e., mothers and/or fathers with children) from throughout Snohomish County for up to three nights a year. This program can provide three families with vouchers each month.

Transitional Housing with Services. The YWCA operates eight transitional housing programs located throughout the county.

Homeward Bound Transitional Housing provides eight units of transitional housing to mothers with children younger than 18 years. While residing in Homeward Bound families receive support services, including, but not limited to case management, parenting services, mental health and chemical dependency services, job training, and legal assistance. To be eligible for this program, families must be residing in emergency shelter at the time of enrollment, and while enrolled they must meet regularly with a family advocate and be working towards self-sufficiency. They also must remain clean and sober and be willing to participate in a program to support their recovery, if necessary.

The YWCA operates eight units of transitional housing under Project Reunite in Everett for chemically dependent homeless mothers who need help to reunite with children under 18 who have been temporarily removed from their custody. Services provided to program participants include substance abuse treatment, mental health and domestic violence counseling, job training, and case management services.

The YWCA operates 12 units of transitional housing in the Edmonds Highlands complex, which is a 120-unit, mixed-income apartment facility owned by the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) located in Edmonds, WA. These units are reserved for single women with children.

Shelter Plus Care and Trinity Place are all transitional housing programs for families provided by YWCA Snohomish County. Project Reunite provides housing to mothers who have children younger than 18 years old and have a history of chemical dependency. Residents of these programs receive assistance in developing and achieving goals and are connected with needed services and/or treatment programs (i.e. permanent housing, legal services, mental health treatment, or parenting classes).

Supportive Permanent Housing. Participants of the Shelter Plus Care program must be single adult females with documented disabilities—severe mental illness, chemical dependency, HIV/AIDS, and/or a developmental disability. Other YWCA supportive permanent housing programs serve mothers with children younger than 18 years old. Those residing in these permanent housing programs, including Sound Families housing sites, receive long-term support services to help with housing retention.

Permanent Housing. As with other housing programs at the YWCA of Snohomish County, permanent housing is provided to mothers with children under age 18. Victorian Woods, Homeward Bound Shelter, Somerset Village and Wear to Live are permanent housing programs operated by the YWCA of Snohomish County. YWCA permanent housing units are rented at affordable rates and its residents have access to YWCA services to promote self-sufficiency.

Support Services Provided

In addition to housing and shelter programs, the YWCA provides food and nutrition, health, and employment-related services. The programs described below are those available to YWCA of Snohomish County clients and related to the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative.

Everett Regional Center serves as the headquarters for YWCA programs in Snohomish County and houses the Pathways Counseling for Women, Children’s Domestic Violence, Shelter Plus Care, and Working Wardrobe programs. Pathways for Women, including Homeward Bound Shelter and Transitional Housing, and Trinity Place are also located in Snohomish County.

Pathways Counseling for Women. Individuals in the community and employment and housing program participants can receive mental health counseling from the Pathways Counseling program. Services are based on a sliding-fee payment scale and include individual, couples, and family counseling. Eligibility is determined during the intake process.

Young Parent Program. Homeless parents between the ages of 18 and 25 who are residing in YWCA housing (transitional or emergency shelter) have access to the Young Parent Program. Participants of the program receive intensive housing and employment case management, parenting classes, GED tutoring and paid internships. Previous outcomes for program participants include gaining employment,

increasing wages, obtaining a GED, enrolling in higher education and/or completing a vocational training program.

Health Care Access. The Health Care Access program facilitates connections between individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and medical care services. Through this program individuals may receive all or some of the following services: health care coverage, medical and dental care, eye exams and glasses, prenatal care and/or health-related information.

Working Wardrobe. After being referred by a case manager, homeless or low-income women have access to a clothing bank with work-appropriate clothing. Clothes are donated by members of the community and retail stores and can be obtained by voucher.

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Planning

Organizational leadership is aware of the Initiative, but unsure about how the details (implementation strategies, family selection, etc.) of the Snohomish County pilot will impact the YWCA. Thus, at baseline there were minimal Initiative-related changes. YWCA's current efforts that relate to the five pillars of the Systems Change Initiative are presented below.

Implementation

Family Identification and Intake. The YWCA accepts client referrals from community agencies. Clients are also referred to the organization by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). A new intake system has been implemented at the YWCA; thus staff is being trained on the organization's coordinated intake process.

The YWCA interns screen clients for services and perform case management for all new families. Intake takes place over the course of two visits. During the intake process, goals for the action plan—long-term and weekly goals—are developed. Clients are either placed in transitional housing or emergency shelter. Families who are ineligible for YWCA housing may be placed in units operated by other agencies.

Prevention. The YWCA provides rental assistance when Emergency Shelter Assistance Program funding is available. FEMA rental assistance funding also permits the YWCA to provide rental assistance, although the organization does not currently have FEMA funding for this.

Rapid Housing. The YWCA of Snohomish County provides transitional housing—families can reside in this housing for a maximum of two years and receive intensive case management throughout the entire two years.

Tailored Services. The YWCA utilizes coordinated intake to screen and identify families for their programs and develops plans of service that are tailored to family needs.

Economic Opportunity. The Displaced Homemaker Program and Life Transitions Program provide the following services to women, usually 40 years old or older: resume writing assistance, support groups, interview training, working wardrobe, and job search assistance. YWCA clients may also take classes at College of Hope. The YWCA of Snohomish County also provides money management renter's certification classes to help families retain housing.

Family Perspective of the Homeless Families System

A focus group was conducted with seven mothers residing in Snohomish County YWCA housing. Participants had between one and four children ranging from two months to 19 years old. Mothers in the focus group expressed varying reasons for their current or recent episode of homelessness; however, lack of employment/steady employment, and thus lack of resources to pay rent, was often identified as the cause for seeking shelter. One mother was working full time for a company and had to leave her job to take care of her baby; leaving the job resulted in not being able to afford her rent. Another participant had been low-income for most of her life, had never held a steady job, and said that she learned how to receive Section 8 from her mother, who had also received Section 8. The participant wanted to live on her own and attend school, but the financial aid was not enough to cover core living expenses. She then began couch surfing and then lived in the King County YWCA shelter before moving to Snohomish County YWCA housing. Several participants primarily requested services from the King County YWCA, but the organization had a long wait list for shelter, including one participant who was on the wait list for seven months. A participant of the focus group who lived in King County YWCA housing said that everyone there knows each other and that counselors support families. She believed that advocates at the YWCA of Snohomish County could be more helpful to families and could do a better job of pushing families. She believed that the advocates are "too laid back."

Several of the participants plan to work towards self-sufficiency or further their education, although some experienced challenges while working towards the goal. Two weeks after moving into housing at Snohomish County YWCA, one participant lost her Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits and her job, and was looking for a new job at the time of the focus group. The mother, who had been low-income for most of her life, said that she could return to school if she wanted and that her financial aid was still available; however, she believed being in shelter gets her more things that she needs. Despite challenges, participants had hope for achieving self-sufficiency. One participant wanted to go to school to become a social worker and provide drug and alcohol counseling. "Self-sufficiency is what I'm trying to get," said a mother in the focus group, "they do prepare you for that here."

Focus group participants discussed case management often, such as one participant who said that although families know some things, they also need case managers to tell them about resources that are available. Participants said that case managers inquire about each family's goals and connect the family with services (i.e., parenting class, budgeting class, and renter's certification) that will help the family to

achieve those goals. A mother who participated in the focus group said, “It’s the persistent people, people with goals who get the shelter spots.”

Focus group members expressed beliefs that some staff members are detached and discriminatory, including one who said that staff do not take the time to get to know families and that some people are treated differently. Another participant agreed saying that some program staff “treat it like a job” while some are invested. One focus group participant had a different experience, however, and said she had gotten to know everyone.

Challenges and Gaps

During an interview with two YWCA case managers, prevention services, child care, bus tickets, and cash assistance were identified as lacking or difficult to access. Case managers have also found that although families graduate from transitional housing programs, there is difficulty identifying landlords who will rent to the families. Organizational leadership identified several gaps in funding (FEMA, Housing Authority of Snohomish County) that have caused services, such as Shelter Plus Care, case management for mental health counseling programs, and prevention programs (i.e., Project Anchor), to be reduced.

Next Steps

Semiannual site visits will inform the next case study and help to highlight organizational changes that have occurred as a result of the Washington Families Fund Systems Change Initiative. The organization’s progress in implementing changes based on the five pillars—coordinated entry, prevention, rapid housing, tailored services, and economic opportunity—will be the focus of coming case studies.

Appendix II-F: Everett Community College Organizational Case Study Snohomish County

Overview

Everett Community College is home to more than 80 educational programs that include a variety of vocational and certificate programs. In order to support students as they pursue certificates and/or Associate's degrees, the college provides diversity, academic, financial, counseling, and career support services. In 2010, Everett Community College partnered with Housing Hope and Coast Real Estate to offer a property management certification program to homeless, low-income students. The Property Works education program began as a pilot project in 2010, and the program received additional support in January 2011 to continue and expand the program.

Everett Community College was chosen as an organization to highlight and follow over the course of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative due to the unique role it plays in its community, its prominence locally, and the potential for providing guidance to other communities that can benefit from this type of program. Everett Community College's participation in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative will provide an opportunity to learn if and how the Initiative impacts programs and services at an educational institution. The purpose of the organizational case studies is to gather information from organizations providing housing and/or services in the three demonstration counties that will help to provide an understanding of how the Initiative is being implemented; the role organizations are playing in the Initiative; what, if any, impact the Initiative is having on organizations; and the changes the organizations are experiencing due to the Initiative, other changes in the system, and other environmental and contextual factors. These organizational case studies will be conducted annually as a part of the systems study component.

This case study begins with details on the Property Works education program, including an organizational profile with a description of the program, collaborations with other organizations, and the program's funding sources. The process for identifying eligible families and details on additional services that are available to program participants are then provided. Next the case study addresses families' perspectives of the services for homeless families, gaps and challenges identified by program staff, and the program's role in the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative. The case study concludes by outlining the next steps in the case study process.

Programs and Services

Organizational Profile

The Property Works certificate program at Everett Community College began in 2010 as a pilot project.

Through this program Everett Community College offers a 19-credit certificate that prepares participants for entry-level positions in property management, and includes computer skills training and 200 hours at an internship. Students take classes in property management of affordable and supportive housing, desk clerk operations, and tenant services and communication. The program helps to address the needs of low-income and homeless students by providing work opportunities for those grappling with securing employment; specifically, the program helps families to enter or reenter the workforce. The Property Works education program graduated its first cohort of 13 students in July of 2010, and enrolled 29 students in its second cohort. In year two the program expanded to include property maintenance; the expansion gave students the option to specialize in the office aspect of property management or in property maintenance. Students in the program's second cohort earn Certificates in Office Leasing and Green Maintenance. In its first cohort seven graduates of the program had secured employment before completing the program.

Property Works Education Program prepares students to work as leasing agents, onsite managers, and maintenance personnel in apartments and commercial buildings. Students attend two quarters of classes, three times per week. After completing the first four weeks of the program, specialized courses, focused on either maintenance or office work, begin. Students taking the office work track continue to attend classes on Everett Community College's campus while maintenance-focused students meet at Housing Hope. Housing Hope arranges all students' internships before the start of the program. After satisfactory job performance over a 10-day probationary period program enrollees are paid minimum wage for their work at the internship. Internship wages paid to students do not impact Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) income, but may impact Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/food stamp benefits.

Housing Hope, Coast Real Estate, and Everett Community College collaborated to create the Property Works education program. Housing Hope provides emergency, transitional, and affordable housing; and an array of other social services, including case management and employment services, to homeless families. Coast Real Estate is a property management company that manages commercial and apartment buildings, including permanent affordable housing for low-income families. The college was approached by Housing Hope to develop a training program that would prepare residents of its housing programs to become property managers. Housing Hope had been exploring mechanisms to help homeless families increase their incomes; thus, the development of this program provided families an opportunity to gain knowledge, skills, and increase their incomes. Staff from Coast Real Estate provided the design and concept for the program and worked with Everett Community College to develop the education component of the program. Staff from Coast Real Estate also serve as instructors for the Property Works Education Program.

The pilot year of the Property Works program was funded through the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). All program participants were recipients of TANF and some completed the program as part of the Work First requirement. The Workforce Development Council of Snohomish County, which oversees the planning and implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act in

Snohomish County, provided funding for the second year of the program in January 2011. Students' internships are funded by Workforce Investment Act funds.

Identification of Eligible Families

Participants for the pilot of the Property Works program largely consisted of TANF recipients identified by DSHS; few had been referred by Housing Hope.

The second cohort of students for this educational program was identified by Housing Hope. Housing Hope targeted homeless and low-income individuals to enroll in the Office Leasing and Green Maintenance certificate program at Everett Community College. The organization's staff performed a screening to assess each individual's employability, including a criminal background check through Washington State Patrol. Some families who enrolled in the second cohort were TANF recipients and most were residing in transitional housing at Housing Hope.

Services Provided

According to staff of Everett Community College, the college recognized that many of the students were homeless and/or were applying for financial aid and using the funds to pay for tuition and for basic living expenses. This was especially apparent when a student's financial aid processing was delayed and the student made a public claim that resulted in the development of a fund for homeless students. Members of the community began donating to the fund to provide assistance to homeless students at Everett Community College.

In addition to the Property Works education program students have access to support programs that provide them with emergency financial assistance.

The Loan Fund, a fund that is used by students and supported by students and other donors, is available for students to use as emergency assistance. Students can access funding for emergencies—utility payments, gas cards, food cards, etc. Students are to pay back the money within the following month and are not charged any interest. Not all students return the money; however, the college does not report to collections agencies. The fund is used to aid currently enrolled students who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Opportunity Grant also allows Everett Community College to provide financial assistance to enrollees. Students can access funds to pay for rent, gas, books, and to address other types of needs that will help them to remain in school. However, students are required to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and apply for federal financial aid to access this assistance.

Family Perspective of the Homeless Families System

A focus group was completed with six parents who were enrolled in the Property Works education program. Participants had between one and three children ranging in age from 15 months to 14 years old. Four of the participants reported living in transitional housing program through Housing Hope; one was residing in permanent supporting housing at Housing Hope, and one participant was residing in permanent subsidized housing provided by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

Families' experiences and challenges prior to obtaining housing varied. Several participants of the groups experienced drug-related problems, such as a mother of two who had a boyfriend who abused drugs and became abusive. After leaving her boyfriend she became involved with someone who manufactured drugs, resulting in a raid of her home, incarceration of her partner, and involvement of Child Protective Services. Another participant and her fiancé were laid off from their jobs on the same day, lost their home, and moved into a friend's garage. After staying in shelter for seven months the family moved to transitional housing. Participants reported have learned about the Property Works program from case managers at social service agencies, including the YWCA and Housing Hope.

Each of the participants had worked previously and had run into challenges with previous employment. Prior to enrolling in the Property Works program, two of the participants had attended a technical/vocational school to become a phlebotomist and a pharmacy technician. However, four individuals had been laid off from their jobs, including the two with previous training, and one had been injured on the job and received a settlement. Among those who had been laid off, three participants of the focus group received unemployment, for between nine months and two years, after having lost their jobs. Of the three participants who reported dates of previous employment, two had not worked since 2008 and one had not worked since 2009. One participant of the focus group was pregnant when she was laid off. Therefore, she had trouble finding a new job, did not receive unemployment, and could not receive TANF due to the amount of unemployment her fiancé was receiving.

After losing employment two participants of the focus group began using drugs. One mother who had been a pharmacy technician became homeless after losing her job, began using methamphetamine, and lost custody of her children to her parents. After losing her children, the participant cycled in and out of substance abuse treatment centers for five years and regained employment in 2008 while living in a truck. Ten thousand dollars in student loan debt has prevented her enrollment in a postsecondary program.

Focus group participants reported positive experiences with the program, but also identified current and future challenges it faces. Of the participants, one had been hired and one had a positive outlook on prospective jobs. Though, someone did not want to be employed at the organization where the internship is located. Participants also reported receiving day care assistance from DSHS while attending the program. The need to strengthen funding was identified as a challenge for Property Works. Students were told they would be provided vouchers for clothing and gas, but had not received the vouchers. When speaking of the delayed receipt of vouchers, a participant of the focus group felt "it's taking too

long” and spoke of not having enough clothes to wear to the internship. The same participant said that students in the program had to provide the same information repeatedly for the WIA database. Also, getting paid once per month and the cost of commuting to and from Everett Community College was identified as a challenge among participants of the focus group.

Retention was a topic of discussion during the focus group, “a lot of people have dropped out,” because, “some internships treat you like you’re there to do the grunt work.” According to a participant of the group, a third of people in class on the first day left the program because they did not really want the job, but needed to fulfill their Work First requirement. The same individual thought the choice to leave the program was an unfortunate one, and believed that “there are other people who would have benefited from this program.”

Challenges and Gaps

Students participating in the Property Works program are not eligible for financial aid; therefore, internships are funded through Workforce Investment Act funds. Everett Community College staff expressed concern regarding the sustainability of the program because of its reliance on these funds. Program staff were uncertain about whether Property Works can cause saturation of the job market and were in discussion with Housing Hope to develop new programs for future cohorts.

The Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative

Since the inception of the Property Works program the Vice President of Instruction and Support Services at Everett Community College was invited to join the Advisory Committee of the Workforce Development Council of Snohomish County. The Workforce Development Council has been involved in the development of the Snohomish County Plan to End Family Homelessness, *Investing in Families*, and has partnered with Building Changes to develop related Requests for Proposals. Participation in this Advisory Committee allows Everett Community College to connect to this work. Everett Community College staff report connections to community resources through attendance of local area plan meetings hosted by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The meetings convene staff from government offices.

Next Steps

Semiannual site visits will inform the next case study and help to highlight organizational changes that have occurred as a result of the Washington Families Fund Systems Initiative. The organization’s progress in implementing changes based on the five pillars—coordinated entry, prevention, rapid housing, tailored services, and economic opportunity—will be the focus of coming case studies.

