



# Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF)



Having a stable home provides youth and families with a foundation for economic success, quality education, and good health. However, nearly **7,000 individuals in households with kids under 18 experience homelessness**, according to WA State's Point-in-Time (PIT) count. Youth and families are especially hard to capture in these counts, and it is estimated the number is higher. This is reflected in WA State 2021-2022 K-12 public school data showing **39,801 students are experiencing homelessness**. What's more, people of color and LGBTQ2+ families disproportionately experience homelessness.

## WYFF addresses the youth and family homelessness crisis

Created in 2004, the Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) is a public/private partnership administered by Building Changes, a nonprofit creating equitable responses to homelessness in WA State. Building Changes grants funds to organizations and tribes that have built trust in their communities and can nimbly and effectively assist youth and families with culturally appropriate services. Building Changes also provides training, capacity building, and research to identify best practices to scale up statewide and improve the response to the crisis. In FY2023, seven organizations and two tribes were funded under WYFF, serving 204 individuals in 137 households. **Of those who exited a program, 65.8% exited into stable housing.**



## WYFF funds organizations and tribes trusted within communities

- WYFF is a statewide program, serving rural and urban areas.
- WYFF serves youth and families often ineligible or not prioritized for other homeless/housing programs.
- WYFF prioritizes BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ families that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.
- WYFF grantees are trusted organizations and tribes that know what approaches work best for their communities. They provide culturally appropriate, trauma-informed services driven by racial equity and created and implemented by people with lived experience.
- Unlike traditional housing support services, WYFF uses flexible, data-driven strategies tailored to meet people's individual needs to equitably address homelessness.

**WA State legislators, foundations, corporations, and donors can reduce youth and family homelessness by financially supporting WYFF.**

## More funding is needed to meet the demand for services

- Often invisible, youth and families are experiencing a homelessness crisis in WA State.
- Demand for this program exceeds funding. In 2022, 57 organizations applied for WYFF for \$37.5 million in requests. This was approximately 13 times the available funding, and only six were funded.

## With more funds, WYFF can serve more people and improve services

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

## WYFF tailors to youth and families, particularly BIPOC and LGBTQ2+



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



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



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



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



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

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

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

