



WASHINGTON
YOUTH & FAMILIES FUND

Washington Youth & Families Fund
2025 Request for Proposals
For Projects Serving
Youth and Young Adults *Application*

Contents

ABOUT BUILDING CHANGES	2
ABOUT THE WASHINGTON YOUTH & FAMILIES FUND.....	2
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	2
BACKGROUND	3
STRATEGY.....	5
OUR APPROACH.....	6
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.....	6
EVALUATION	8
APPLICATION INFORMATION	9
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	9
TARGET POPULATION	9
GEOGRAPHY	10
EXPECTATIONS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS.....	10
TWO-PART APPLICATION, REVIEW & SELECTION, AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS	10
NOTIFICATION	11
APPEAL PROCESS.....	11
TIMELINE*	11
SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS	12
INITIAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION.....	12
APPLICATION FORM REQUIREMENTS.....	12
APPLICATION FORM.....	12
<i>Applicant Information</i>	12
<i>Project Information</i>	13
APPLICATION NARRATIVE.....	13
<i>Executive Summary</i>	13
<i>Narrative Questions</i>	13

About Building Changes

[Building Changes](#) (BC) advances equitable responses to homelessness across Washington state by centering communities, aligning fragmented systems, and advocating for lasting policy change. With a focus on children, youth, and families, we work across housing, education, and health to prevent homelessness before it begins. For those currently experiencing homelessness, we help communities and service providers design solutions that lift people out of homelessness through housing first solutions that quickly resolve crises and secure lasting stability.

Through the [Washington Youth & Families Fund \(WYFF\)](#), Building Changes partners with local organizations to test and expand innovative, culturally grounded strategies that promote housing stability, healing, and long-term wellbeing for families most impacted by homelessness.

About the Washington Youth & Families Fund

The Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2004 and amended to include youth in 2014. Building Changes administers this fund of public and private dollars to make grants across the state focused on innovative housing interventions and strategies. To date, we have awarded \$66.7 million in funding to 130 grantees—including two tribes—across 26 counties.

Through our WYFF grantmaking, we:

- Identify and test promising practices in partnership with providers and community;
- Collect data and evaluate interventions, models, and programs;
- Advance strategies informed by research, community experience, and lessons from previous cohorts to more intentionally guide future investments; and
- Support housing and service providers through peer learning, training, and capacity building.

Funding Opportunity

Building Changes will make available between \$250,000- \$500,000 in funding to housing and social service agencies, non-profit community-based organizations, federally recognized tribes, and culturally-specific/By-For Organizations in Washington state for projects promoting and expanding Diversion-first systems for young people experiencing homelessness. Through WYFF, Building Changes provides funding, technical assistance, and capacity building to organizations and partnerships for up to three years per project. The Fund seeks to identify and test promising practices, collect and evaluate data, and advance strategies informed by research, community experience, and lessons from previous cohorts to more intentionally guide future investments. WYFF also supports housing and service providers through peer learning, training, and capacity building.

The programs which have historically been available to fund housing solutions have perpetually maintained a definition of success narrowed to independent housing units. This white-supremacist ideal that overvalues individualism often fails to meet the needs or desires of many of the young people whose housing is in crisis, particularly youth of color, queer, trans, & gender non-conforming young people, and those who have been system involved.

Background

Anyone who has spent time working with young people experiencing homelessness knows that the current system isn't working for them. Building Changes has learned the best way to quickly and safely stabilize young people is to meet them where they are at with services that meet their basic needs and provide essential legal and trauma-informed support. By expanding housing options for young people, we can make these systems work for all young people, regardless of circumstance. This work is critical to remove barriers and improve outcomes for young people experiencing housing crises, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQIA2S+ populations, pregnant and parenting young people, and young people with disabilities and behavioral health needs.

Diversion—**housing problem-solving conversations** paired with **flexible assistance**— has proven especially effective in addressing gaps in youth homelessness support systems because it enables a creative, strengths-based, and holistic approach that young people deserve. The [Homeless Prevention & Diversion Fund \(HPDF\)](#) refined and operationalized this approach into a true “no-wrong-door” model ensuring that young people can access flexible assistance for housing solutions with whatever agency or provider they trusted most. This innovation not only out-performs most housing interventions for many young people of all backgrounds —helping more than 90% exit into stable housing—but also strengthens the capacity and collaboration needed to scale up local homeless prevention efforts that truly work for young people.

While this model has shown remarkable success, Building Changes is ready to carry the work forward, advancing sustainable, Diversion-first communities that young people across Washington can rely on.

Strategy

Building Changes is committed to transforming how Washington responds to youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness by promoting youth-centered Diversion as the foundation of preventing and restabilizing young people in a housing crisis. **The 2025 Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) funding cycle for youth and young adults will focus on reinforcing the progress achieved by the Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF).** We are focused on two main priorities: sustaining the progress communities have made in expanding access to Diversion and flexible assistance for young people and building long-term independence by strengthening community ownership and collaboration around the model.

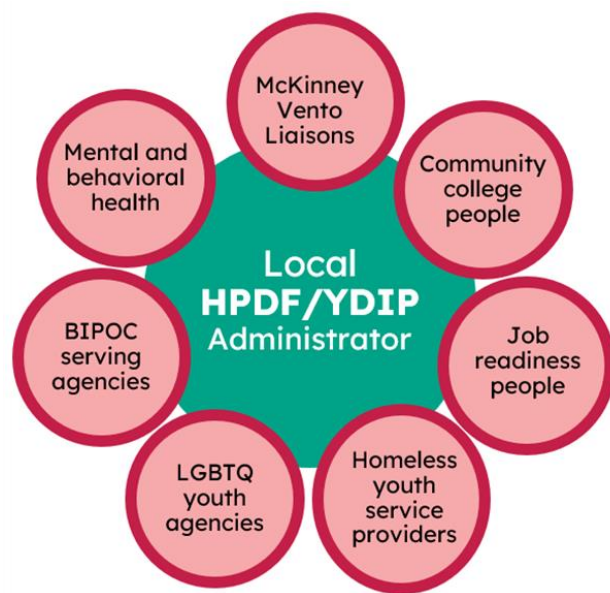
Why is this important for Washington’s young people? The need is great. There are more than 14,400 young people experiencing homelessness in our state, and nearly two-thirds were either unsheltered, staying with friends or family, or permanently housed before accessing homeless services.¹ We also know that this figure likely undercounts many young people—including BIPOC, queer and gender-expansive young people, and young people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds— who face unique barriers accessing services and often rely on survival strategies that are safe and culturally attuned. This tells us we must expand access by bringing services closer to young people and resourcing trusted providers to prioritize housing first and build a true Diversion-first system for young people.

The Homeless Prevention & Diversion Fund was designed to address youth housing crises for youth by centering the Diversion approach, directing resources toward whatever housing solution a young person identifies as the best fit for their situation. This strategy increases the capacity for communities to redirect, or *divert*, young people away from traditional homelessness services and toward housing solutions they identify for themselves. Creative solutions that require flexible financial support—without caps or strict spending restrictions—are centralized within a single organization (the Fiscal Administrator). Communities access these funds through shared training that reinforces the core principles of Diversion.

This strategy ensures that the full network of service providers—whether traditional housing programs, healthcare providers, education systems, community centers, or other local support systems—can access resources quickly and without red tape when they’re helping a young person with a housing solution within reach. Not only does this strategy democratize funding access and advance Diversion, it also builds capacity for communities to reduce and effectively end homelessness by preserving more effective support for young people who truly need it—[achieving functional zero](#).

¹ Washington State Department of Commerce: “2024 Unaccompanied YYA Landscape Scan - Data Highlights”

Finally, this model improves system efficiency by placing administrative responsibilities with a single organization and allowing more providers to focus on supporting young people and collaborating with one another.



Several communities across Washington have made progress toward functional zero for unaccompanied young people, in part because they successfully established an HPDF.

Case Study: [A Way Home Washington's Anchor Community of Spokane achieves 20% reduction in youth and young adult homelessness \(Community Solutions\)](#)

Until last year, A Way Home Washington played a key role in this progress, not only helping communities maintain fidelity to Diversion principles and effectively use flexible funds, but also coaching local agencies serving as Fiscal Administrators to become core partners and build community buy-in to shift policies, practices, and culture toward a Diversion-first system.

Our Approach

Moving forward with a Diversion-first YYA system

The overall goal of the **2025 Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) funding cycle for youth and young adults** is to establish the HPDF model as a vital and sustainable community-driven tool for achieving functional zero for unaccompanied youth and young adults 12-24 years old in Washington state. This approach will gradually shift local HPDF Fiscal Administrators from Building Changes' scaffolded support to greater autonomy and local ownership for long-term sustainability. That includes maintaining consistent trainings to keep the model visible and accessible aligning policies and practices with the local homeless response system and strengthening on-the-ground capacity for technical assistance and continuous improvement based on local needs.

To focus limited resources and elevate reconnection as a core Diversion strategy, this approach will **prioritize unaccompanied youth aged 12-17 and young adults aged 18-24**. It also creates space to explore the specific

needs of this group, especially in comparison to equally important efforts to prevent homelessness among young people who are part of larger family networks, particularly in communities where HPDF has already been piloted.

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of this project to reach this overall goal are as follows:

Objective 1: Engage in local spaces where community efforts to end homelessness for youth and young adults are being held as a leader and ambassador of Diversion-first approach.

Every community's homeless crisis response system has their own unique needs, and the flexibility of the centralized Diversion model creates space to show up in ways young people need. Fiscal Administrators will be expected to take a lead role in identifying and elevating the strengths and barriers young people experience as they navigate the homeless response system. This includes engaging other providers, collaborating with government partners, and driving improvements that expand access and resources, not only for Diversion, but across the entire system. Fiscal Administrators will also need to define the data they will use to measure the project's impact on the local community framework.

If a grantee pursuing the Fiscal Administrator role is operating in a county without a functional zero initiative, they must proactively engage in community spaces where strategies to reduce and end homelessness for unaccompanied youth and young adults within their Continuum of Care are happening. In those convening spaces, the grantee's representative should recognize themselves as experts and leaders in Diversion work, fully participating in strategic discussions and contributing their knowledge to advance the work.

Objective 2: Ensure that unaccompanied young people aged 12-17 and young adults aged 18-24 in the community who can't, won't and/or don't access the housing projects through the homeless crisis response system have financial resources to meet their self-identified housing plans, particularly those who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA2S+ who are disproportionately overrepresented among populations of those experiencing homelessness. As local providers become certified, they will begin submitting requests to remove financial barriers from the housing plans they've developed alongside the young people they serve. A Fiscal Administrator will receive and process requests to ensure timely payment for expediting the stabilization of young people's housing solutions. As efforts to target Diversion become more effective, successfully achieving this objective would indicate that traditional housing programs are also becoming more effectively accessed

Objective 3: Establish and sustain understanding of Diversion and access to the HPDF through:

- 1. Conducting local certification trainings**
- 2. Holding community learning circles to support local partners in accessing flexible funds.**

Historically, HPDF certification trainings for local providers to access flexible funds, as well as community convenings held to promote the continuation of shared learning, have been facilitated by a third-party technical assistance provider. This reliance on an outside facilitator is not sustainable for the longevity of a project like HPDF, nor does it promote the fierce sense of community this project embodies. Support from Building Changes to provide a train-the-trainer model and pivoting our technical assistance model toward building the capacity and culture within the community, led by the Fiscal Administrator, will address both these shortcomings. By facilitating the certification trainings at the local level, Fiscal Administrators can develop trusting and supportive relationships with new community partners from the outset. This will also give trainees a better understanding of expectations and processes for submitting requests with a more locally aware context.

Objective 4: Establish a “Diversion-first” community so that Diversion is seen as the best practice for engaging young people. The core principles behind Diversion conversations draw from a blend of established best practices used across human services. The Diversion focus ensures young people are being met where they are physically, mentally, and emotionally. This helps young people access resources that best suit the housing goals they themselves have identified. The centralized Diversion model supports a higher degree of consistency for how these best practices are embedded in housing conversations with youth and young adults across all providers in a given community.

It is expected that grantees taking on this Fiscal Administrator role will help communities in the shift from “building housing plans that fit available resources” to “connecting young people with resources they need and have identified.”

A Collaborative Commitment

Building Changes seeks to partner with organizations that are positioned to support unaccompanied minors (e.g., highly mobile youth, youth who shelter hop, etc.) and young adults through a Diversion-first approach. Grantees will be expected to work collaboratively with Building Changes, local community providers, and the Fiscal Administrator to maintain consistent Diversion practices, participate in required learning activities, and support the overall coordination of Diversion in their county. This collaboration is intended to strengthen program implementation, increase access of flexible funds for unaccompanied minors, and ensure that Diversion resources are used efficiently and in alignment with established procedures.

What We Want to Learn

Through this investment, we aim to identify how Diversion is being implemented for unaccompanied minors and young adults at the local level and what factors support effective delivery. Building Changes will use data and grantee feedback to better understand:

- How organizations are reaching and serving unaccompanied youth;
- What supports or approaches improve access, timeliness, and housing stability for youth;
- How Fiscal Administrators manage requests, communications, and consistency with providers;
- What challenges arise in implementing Diversion for youth and how communities address them; and
- What operational practices help maintain program reliability and efficiency.

Building Changes will provide evaluation support, technical assistance, and opportunities for peer learning through Learning Circles. These learning spaces will allow grantees to share insights, document challenges, and strengthen their approaches collectively.

This work builds upon the groundwork established by communities piloting the HPDF over the past five years.

Evaluation

What Does Success Look Like?

Building Changes aims to learn the most effective implementation of Diversion for unaccompanied minors and young adults and the use of flexible funds to support safe and stable housing outcomes. Success includes:

- Increased number of unaccompanied youth accessing Diversion;
- Youth exiting to sustainable, safe, and stable housing;
- Consistent application of Diversion practices across trained providers;
- Timely processing of requests by Fiscal Administrators; and
- Improved communication and coordination.

Success also includes the ability of organizations to maintain program procedures, participate in required training and learning activities, and support accurate data collection and reporting.

Selected grantees will be encouraged to develop a collaborative working relationship with their local Coordinated Entry as an essential partner to share project learnings, as well as improve and increase access and services, especially for overrepresented young people experiencing homelessness.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) proficiency is preferred, but Building Changes will provide HMIS technical assistance and training to grantees as needed, as well as support for making connections with local Coordinated Entry partners.

Measurement

Grantees will be responsible for collecting and reporting data that reflects program activity, housing outcomes, and participation in required program components. Measures will include (but not be limited to):

- Number of unaccompanied minors served;
- Number and percentage of youth exiting to safe and stable housing;
- Number and percentage of youth returning to homelessness;
- Time between request submission and request approval or denial;
- Demographic information for all youth served (disaggregated where possible);
- Number of trainings offered, number of certified requesters, and number of certified requesters making request;
- Participation in required trainings, learning circles, and community meetings; and
- Narrative reflections on program implementation, challenges, and local coordination.

These measures will be used to support program accountability, assess consistency in implementation, and help identify where additional training or technical assistance may be needed. Additional data elements may be requested if necessary to better understand community-level trends or implementation challenges.

Application Information

Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, regional and statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes, local housing authorities, and public development authorities are invited to apply.

Culturally-specific organizations or smaller organizations led and staffed by people of color and primarily serving communities of color (By-For Organizations) are encouraged to apply, even if you are not currently delivering homeless and housing services. Building Changes will provide training and technical assistance if selected as a grantee.

Target Population

Youth: Homeless and unstably housed youth, as defined by:

- Person aged 12-17
- Unaccompanied, i.e., experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- Lacking an adequate, fixed or safe nighttime residence (including couch-surfing/doubled-up)
- “Runaway” youth

Young Adults: Homeless and unstably housed young adults, as defined by:

- Person aged 18-24
- Lacking an adequate, fixed or safe nighttime residence (including couch-surfing/doubled-up)

Additionally, the following experiences and backgrounds of youth and young adults are explicitly identified if they also are experiencing homelessness or housing instability:

- Young people exiting juvenile detention, jail, prison, foster care, mental health crisis centers, or drug rehabilitation centers into homelessness
- Parenting/pregnant youth & young adults
- Survivors of Domestic Violence
- Emancipated minors

Geography

Organizations, tribes, and agencies across Washington State are invited to apply. Applicants are encouraged to use data in their application to demonstrate the need for greater resources to support unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing housing instability and homelessness in their community, particularly BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ young people. Special consideration will be given to applicants serving counties where there are current efforts to implement a centralized diversion model in tandem with functional zero strategies.

Expectations for Funded Projects

Outcomes and Evaluation

- Expected outputs include:
 - Exits to permanent housing
 - Returns to homelessness within three months below 25%
 - Percent of BIPOC YYA served equal to or greater than percent represented in local homeless population
 - Percent of LGBTQIA2S+ YYA served equal to or greater than percent represented in local homeless population
 - Percent of transgender/gender diverse YYA served equal to or greater than percent represented in local homeless population
- Other outputs tracked include:
 - Number of community coalitions attended per month
 - Number of community coalitions where WYFF YYA findings are presented per month
 - Number of local certification trainings held per quarter
 - Number of persons certified per training opportunity
 - Number of local learning circles held for trained requesters per quarter
 - Number of participants in learning circles per meeting
- Outcomes measured and compared to baseline include:
 - Average cost per diversion request

Two-Part Application, Review & Selection, and Notification Process

This competitive RFP process will consist of a two-part application and review and selection process. In the first round, interested applicants must submit an initial proposal. Completed initial proposals will be reviewed according to a standard rubric by a First Round Selection Committee consisting of subject matter and lived experts, Building Changes' staff and Board members. Top scoring applicants will be invited to complete a second and final round of the application and review and selection process. Based on the outcome of that review, Building Changes staff will make final funding recommendations to the Building Changes Board of Directors for approval.

Notification

All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their first round proposal by Monday, February 2, 2026. Final awards will be announced in March 2026, with project contracts set to begin in April 2026.

Appeal Process

Building Changes' appeal process:

1. *Grounds for an Appeal: Applicants may only submit an appeal on the following grounds: Failure by Building Changes to follow procedures outlined in this Request for Proposal; and/or discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of a rater.*
2. *Appeal Window: Appeals will be considered from Monday, February 2 – Monday, February 9, 2026.*
3. *How to Submit an Appeal: Building Changes must receive all appeals in writing during the appeal window. Appeals will be reviewed by the Director of Practice Innovation. Appeals must be emailed to the Director of*

Practice Innovation, Dimitri Groce, at Dimitri.Groce@BuildingChanges.org. Applicants should indicate the grounds for their appeal and a short description of why they are appealing.

4. *Review of an Appeal: All materials (application, score sheets, reviewer comments, supplemental materials) pertaining to the applicant along with the appeal letter will be reviewed by the Director of Practice Innovation, who has the authority to have a new reviewer read and consider the application. Building Changes will have 10 business days from the end of the Appeal Window (January 5) to review the materials and provide a written decision back to the applicant.*

Timeline*

Issue Request for Proposals	November 24, 2025
Q&A Session (Virtual): Register here	December 8, 2025: 12:00 – 1:00 PM PST
FAQ and Q&A Session Recording Posted on Building Changes Website	December 16, 2025
Initial Proposals Due to Building Changes by 11:59 PM PST	January 12, 2026
All Applicants Notified About Outcome of Their Initial Proposal	February 2, 2026
Appeal Window	February 2 – February 9, 2026
Finalist Application Process	February 3 - February 27, 2026
Final Awards Announced	March 2026
Contracts in Place with New Grantees	April 2026

**Building Changes reserves the right to revise the above timeline.*

Details of Q&A Session (Virtual)

Monday, December 8, 2025: 12:00-1:00 PM PST	<p>Please register for Washington Youth & Families Fund 2025 RFP for Projects Serving Youth and Young Adults Q&A Session here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nRVmSAkqQNKbb_RpN9gpkw.</p> <p>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Zoom session.</p>
---	--

Please submit questions in advance via email by **COB Thursday, December 8, 2026**, to WYFF@BuildingChanges.org.

Submission Instructions

Initial Proposal Submission

Completed initial proposals for the first round of this competitive RFP process must be received by Building Changes no later than 11:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on Monday, January 12, 2026. Proposals must be submitted using our [online application form](#). All responses and materials should be prepared before beginning the online application form. Uploads submitted via the online application form must be in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Fax transmissions cannot be received by Building Changes and cannot be used for submission of proposals.

Proposals that do not follow the specified format and/or do not meet the submission requirements will not be reviewed. Late proposals will not be accepted, unless Building Changes’ online form is found to be at fault, at Building Changes’ sole determination.

Completed initial proposals must include the following:

- Completed [online application form](#) with required applicant information, project information, and file upload noted below.
- Application Narrative: Includes Executive Summary and written responses to all narrative questions (see below) in Microsoft Word or PDF format submitted as one file upload with the online application form.

Application Form Requirements

IMPORTANT: The following information and materials should be prepared in advance of beginning the [online application form](#). Online applications must be completed and submitted in one session. Online applications may **NOT** be started, saved, and resumed later for submission.

Application Form

Applicants will be required to enter the following information into the online application form:

Applicant Information

- Organization Name and Address
- Primary Contact for Application (Name, Title, Email Address, Phone Number)
- Contact information for person submitting the application (if different from Primary Contact for Application)

Checkbox/Yes or No Questions (10%):

- The applicant organization is a nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization; regional/statewide nonprofit housing assistance organization; federally recognized tribe; local housing authority; or public development authority.
- The applicant organization is a culturally-specific, By-For, and/or Black, Indigenous, People of the Global Majority (BIPOGM)-led and -serving organization.
- The applicant organization has familiarity and access to Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- The applicant organization is currently involved with Coordinated Entry in their community.
- The applicant organization has a pre-existing data infrastructure.

Project Information

- Title of Proposed Project
- Geographic Area Served by Project (Specify counties and/or other geographic area)
- Proposed Use of WYFF Funds (Summarize in 2 or 3 sentences how the WYFF funds would be used)
- Total Proposed WYFF Budget (Total request should not exceed \$500,000), including the amount of:
- Flexible Funds \$_____
- Other Costs \$_____
- Indirect Costs \$_____
- Sub-contracted costs, if applicable \$_____
- Total WYFF Request: \$_____

Application Narrative

Completed initial proposals must include responses to ALL prompts and questions below. Percentages indicate weighting of categories for review. Use 12-point font and keep responses to a maximum of 6 pages total for all responses. The Application Narrative should be submitted as one file upload in .DOC or .PDF format with the online application form. Please include applicant organization name in uploaded file name. Example: "(YourOrgName)-ApplicationNarrative"

Executive Summary

Please provide a summary of your proposal that includes an overview of your project, why it is important, and how your organization is uniquely positioned to make an impact through this work. Use 12-point font, and limit response to a maximum of 1 page total.

Narrative Questions

Please respond to the questions below. Use 12-point font and limit responses to a maximum of 6 pages total. Percentages indicate weighting of categories for review.

1. How will putting Diversion first improve your community's response to YYA homelessness?
 - a. What services gaps do you see in your community that a centralized diversion model could fill?
 - b. How will Diversion and access to flex funds address disparities experienced by BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ YYA in your community?
2. What community convening spaces does your organization already participate in, or will participate in, where efforts to end homelessness are discussed? How will your role as Fiscal Administrator inform how you show up in those spaces?
3. In reference to Objective 3: Please describe your organization's capacity to support your staff in facilitating trainings, as well as to create space for shared learning with providers in your community.
4. How has your organization used program data to inform and support iteration and improvement for services and programs internally? How has your organization used program data to inform and advocate for change in your community's system response?
5. As a vital component of relationship building with other service providers, how do you intend to manage incoming requests? How would you navigate conflicts, should they arise?
6. Please share how your finance department and program staff work together to disperse payments and track client assistance dollars.