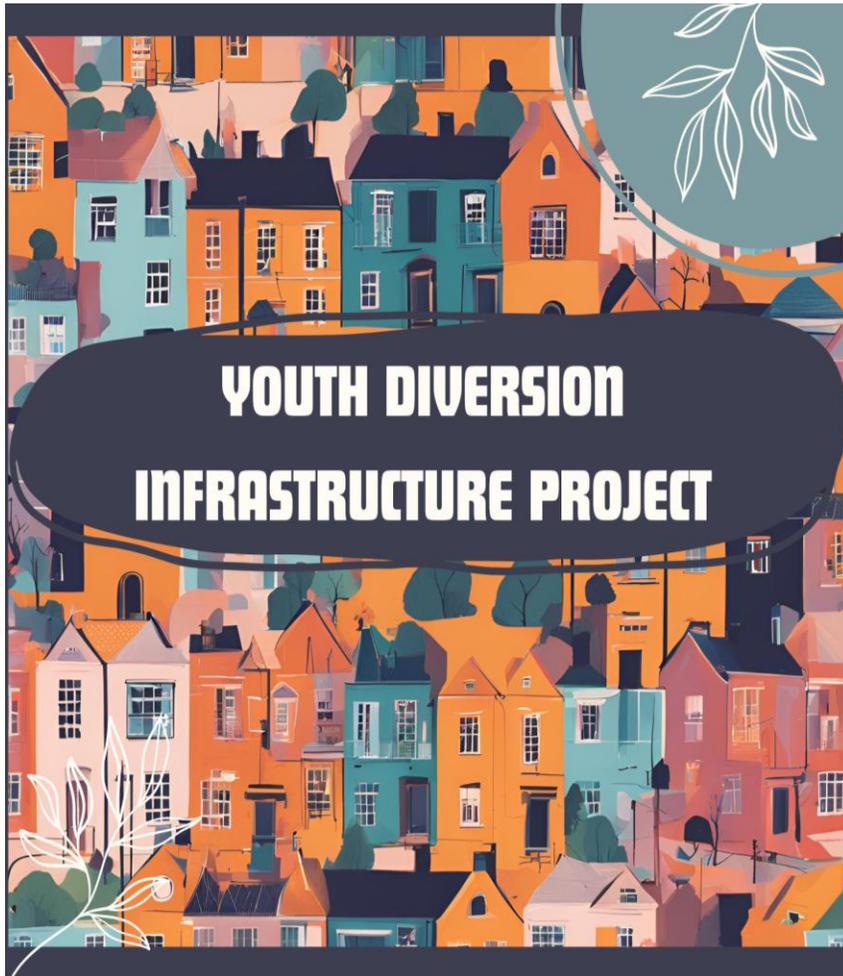


Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project (YDIP)

Program Evaluation Report, January 2023 – August
2025



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Executive Summary

The [Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project \(YDIP\)](#), launched in January 2023 was designed to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults under the age of 25 who are exiting systems of care and facing an immediate housing crisis. YDIP is implemented in six counties across Washington State (including Clark, King Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties) and provides flexible financial assistance to divert youth away from the homelessness response system while not contributing to the overcapacity of that system.

This report evaluates the impact of YDIP from February 2023 to August 2025, combining both quantitative and qualitative data from requests forms, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). **Findings reveal that YDIP is a highly effective, responsive, and equitable approach to preventing youth homelessness and promoting long-term housing stability across Washington State.** Key takeaways:

- **YDIP served 693 households at an average cost of \$1,872 per household.** This is a fraction of the cost compared to other housing interventions such as emergency shelters at \$9,556, transitional housing at \$20,548, and rapid re-housing at \$21,969. This cost-efficiency generates a strong return on investment maximizing immediate impact with limited resources. Most funds were used for rental assistance/arrears, housing deposits, and eviction prevention.
- **Among participants tracked in HMIS, 83% of clients remained stably housed after being served by YDIP.** This is higher than other housing interventions such as transitional housing at 81%, transitional housing at 58%, and emergency shelters at 16%. This data indicates that flex funds can lead to long-term housing stability. Qualitative data from youth and providers reinforced these findings.
- **67% of clients were above the age of 18 with 39% of them identifying as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC).** The largest proportion of clients were exiting from the child welfare system/foster care at 36%, followed by behavioral health facilities at 32%, and the criminal legal system at 24%.
- **YDIP’s speed and accessibility were the consistent strengths of the program.** Funds were typically distributed within three days of a submission request allowing providers to respond before crises escalated into homelessness. The program’s low barrier process made it easy for providers and youth to navigate.

Conclusion

Data from this evaluation demonstrates that YDIP and the Centralized Diversion Model are effective, sustainable, and scalable solutions for preventing youth homelessness. Continued and increased investment in YDIP, as well as improved cross-system coordination between housing, education, behavioral health, child welfare, and juvenile justice sectors, will ensure that every young person exiting a system of care can transition into stable, safe housing as a foundation for their future opportunity.

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Abbreviations

AI/AN	American Indian/Alaska Native
ANHOPI	Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander
AWHWA	A Way Home Washington
BC	Building Changes
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
FA	Fiscal Administrator
HB 1905	House Bill 1905
HPDF	Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund
LGBQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer
OHY	Washington State Department of Commerce, Office of Homeless Youth
SB 6560	Senate Bill 6560
YDIP	Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project
YYA	Youth and Young Adults

Overview

The [Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project \(YDIP\)](#) is a program of [Building Changes \(BC\)](#). YDIP was originally implemented as a joint project of BC and A Way Home Washington (AWHWA) before AWHWA sunset in December 2024. The program serves youth and young adults (YYA) under the age of 25 experiencing a housing crisis and exiting systems of care in different counties throughout Washington State. YDIP combines the Diversion approach and the development of Centralized Diversion Funds to provide YYA clients with access to one-time flexible funding sources to promote housing stability. This project is funded through the [Washington State Department of Commerce’s Office of Homeless Youth \(OHY\)](#) as well as private funding from the [Raikes Foundation](#) and the [Schultz Family Foundation](#). The first grant cycle began August 15, 2022, and implementation began January 1, 2023. The first YDIP flexible funding request was placed on February 16, 2023.

What is Diversion?

Diversion is an approach used to assist individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis to quickly move into stable housing. This is achieved by combining creative, strengths-based conversations with flexible funding when needed to facilitate a creative housing solution. The Diversion (or Housing Problem-solving) approach draws from best practices of motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and person-centered theory, to equip providers with the skills to listen and talk with an individual or family and collaborate to develop a housing plan in an empowering and client-led way.

About HB 1905 (2021–22)

The funding for this project includes public dollars appropriated by the Washington State Legislature from House Bill (HB) 1905 (2021-22). Taking effect on June 9, 2022, **the aim of HB 1905 is to ensure youth exiting publicly funded systems of care transition into safe and stable housing.** This was built upon the efforts of Senate Bill (SB) 6560, which took effect on June 7, 2018. Publicly funded systems of care include:

- Child welfare or foster care systems
- Juvenile detention and rehabilitation centers
- Adult detention centers and jail
- Inpatient behavioral health facilities
- Psychiatric hospitals
- Mental health crisis centers
- Substance use rehabilitation centers
- Emergency rooms for behavioral health crises
- Select OHY programs

Various models are being used throughout the state to meet the goal of HB 1905 to address YYA homelessness. Thus, OHY funded Building Changes to address YYA through a Centralized Diversion Fund model.

[See HB 1905 \(2021-22\)](#)

The goal of Diversion is to identify points of connection in one’s own community and develop it into housing solutions that exist outside of the homeless response system. A key aspect of Diversion is that it can provide one-time flexible financial assistance, known as “flex funds,” to help the individual or family obtain stable housing. Flex funds can be used for a security deposit, rental assistance, utility assistance, storage, eviction prevention, relocation costs, moving assistance, application fees, and other costs that can be tied to securing stable housing.

What is the Centralized Diversion Fund?

A [Centralized Diversion Fund](#) model aims to increase access to funding in communities while making flexible funding more available to those communities. Through this model, community-based organizations, service providers, and practitioners are trained in Diversion and become certified to access flex funds from a single Fiscal Administrator (FA) in their community. The FA’s role is to quickly review, process, and disburse flexible funding once a request has been submitted on behalf of a young person ideally within 72 hours of the request being made. This model is intended to create a true “no wrong door” homeless response system by ensuring equitable access to funding for housing solutions, regardless of an organization’s sector, access to public funding for homelessness, or role in community service delivery.

The overall goal of the centralized model is to eliminate the referral-based norm of accessing housing resources, so those in a housing crisis can get what they need from the places and providers they already know and trust. By creating partnerships between the diverse network of organizations and practitioners supporting and concentrating the administrative capacity of dispersing flexible funds to a singular FA, this model ensures that practitioners can focus on facilitating Diversion conversations to find creative housing solutions with clients where they are. This also promotes the best practices of Diversion to a broader ecosystem than just housing providers such as organizations focused on job readiness, behavioral health, juvenile rehabilitation, and more (see Figure 1).

BC chose the Centralized Diversion Fund model for YDIP because of its demonstrated success in expanding options for exiting homelessness quickly. This means getting people housed quickly, addressing racial disparities and systemic racism, and ultimately simplifying and standardizing the process for community-based organizations. The first ever Centralized Diversion Fund program in Washington state (the Centralized Diversion Fund) began in 2019 by Africatown International and BC to serve families and adult individuals in King County.¹ Then, in 2020, AHWHA launched the [Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund \(HPDF\)](#) in Anchor Communities, the first Centralized Diversion Fund program specifically for YYA. Both are still in operation and continue to demonstrate equitable access and effectiveness in getting people and families housed stably and quickly.

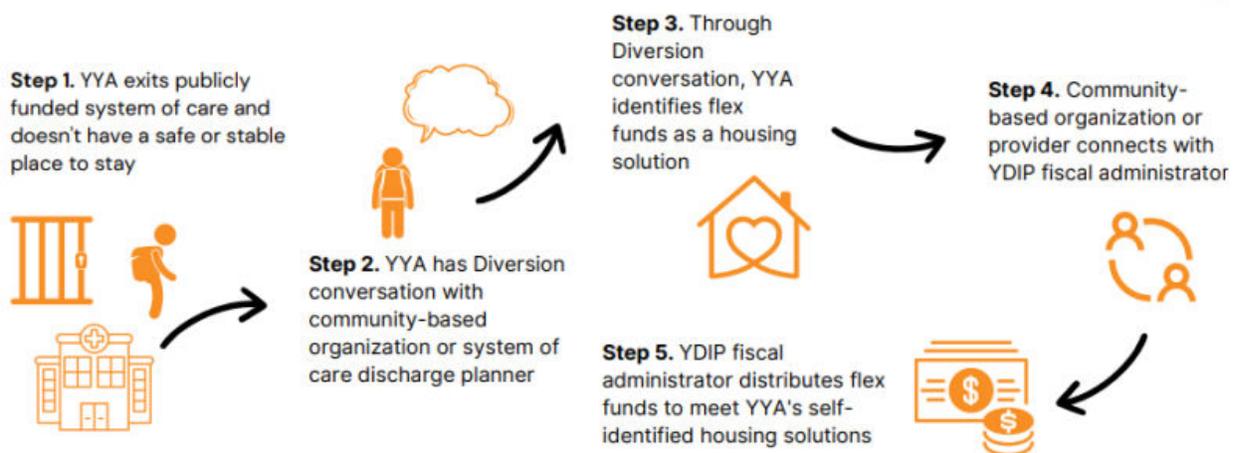
¹ Building Changes. (2020). A Centralized Approach: *Using a scaled model of Diversion to address homelessness in King County*. Seattle, WA: Building Changes.

Figure 1.
Structure of YDIP Partnerships



YDIP provides an opportunity to meet the goal of HB 1905 to support YYA exiting systems of care in different counties. The YDIP process is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2.
Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project (YDIP) Process



YYA are eligible for flexible funding from YDIP if they meet all following criteria:

- Under the age of 25
- Currently exiting, imminently exiting, or have already exited a publicly funded system of care as defined by HB 1905
- In need of safe and stable housing as defined by the young person and at imminent risk of homelessness

The Implementation and Expansion of YDIP

BC (along with AWHWA at the time) identified FAs and counties where YDIP would have the greatest impact, based on indicators that demonstrated high need, as well as geographic representation across the state. The initial five counties selected to pilot YDIP included Clark, Pierce, Spokane, Walla

Walla, and Yakima. These communities were able to utilize the pre-existing capacity and infrastructure of their Centralized Diversion Fund in HPDF to begin implementing YDIP.

King County was another community that ranked high in terms of where YDIP and Diversion services could have a high impact. However, due to the need to rapidly begin implementation and after observing the success in the five original counties, BC developed a plan to expand YDIP implementation into King County by identifying an FA in July 2024.

A funding barrier was also identified through YDIP implementation. Success of the model depends on the ability to meet urgent and critical needs by providing flex funds to clients as soon as possible. Small, grassroots organizations may not always have the funds to meet that need through reimbursement-based contracting agreements because lack of cashflow to accommodate flex fund requests while waiting for reimbursement.

After identifying this challenge during the pilot year of YDIP, BC worked with OHY to develop a deliverable-based payment structure so that the volume of requests would not impact the availability of YDIP flex funds in each community. In addition to ensuring the sustainability of YDIP, this iteration can generate opportunities for OHY and other agencies to consider delivery-based payment structures as a feasible approach to promote strategies that empower and meaningfully resource smaller, grassroots organizations in the future.

Figure 3.
Map of Counties Implementing YDIP



Evaluation

This evaluation of YDIP covers the entire program following the first submission from February 2024 to August 2025. This project is currently serving YYA clients in six communities in the following counties: Clark, King, Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima. It should be noted that King County received their first YDIP request in February 2025, so only a small portion of King County data is represented in this evaluation.

For this evaluation of YDIP, Building Changes aimed to address these key questions:

- **How do flex funds support or fail meeting YYA’s housing needs?**
- **How has YDIP contributed to housing stability for YYA at 3-, 6-, and 12-months post support?**
- **How have fiscal administrators and providers experienced YDIP? What supports or improvements are needed?**

Evaluation Design

This evaluation was informed by both quantitative and qualitative data that were collected, analyzed, and synthesized. Quantitative data were analyzed using R, Tableau, and Excel for descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes.

Data Sources

Data sources for this evaluation included request form data, training data, and qualitative data from individual interviews with YYA clients and an FA focus group.

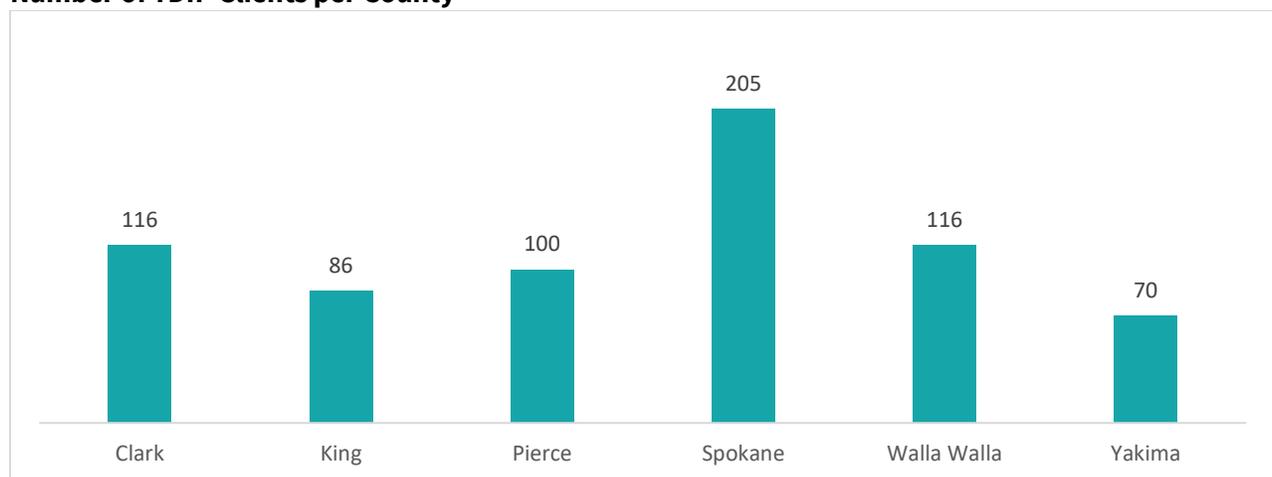
- **Request form data:** BC extracted the data in the request forms from providers and analyzed the data for requests and YYA who received flex funds. These data include number of households served, demographic information, current living situation, system of care involvement, flex funding amount and characteristics, pregnant or parenting status, student status, and domestic violence survivor status. Some of the data are suppressed or grouped together due to small numbers to maintain client privacy in areas that may be sensitive.
- **Homeless management information system (HMIS) data:** HMIS data was provided by the Department of Commerce’s Data Performance Unit to assess housing stability rates among youth who accessed YDIP.
- **Individual interviews with YDIP clients:** Between September 30 and October 31, 2025, BC conducted two virtual 1-hour interviews with youth who have received YDIP funds. BC reached out to providers who then reached out to clients. They were asked about their experience accessing YDIP funds, their experience exiting a system of care, and any additional resources that would help maintain housing stability. They received a \$75 e-gift card for their participation. See Appendix A for interview questions.

- **Focus group discussion with FAs:** On September 5, 2025, BC conducted an hour and a half virtual focus group with all six FAs. They were asked about their experiences and perspectives on their role as an FA, strengths and weaknesses of YDIP, and areas where it can be improved. See Appendix B for the discussion questions.
- **Survey of providers who accessed YDIP flex funds:** From September 12 to October 13, 2025, BC conducted an online survey for providers who have been trained and certified to access YDIP flex funds. Survey outreach was conducted via email and reached an estimated 290 providers. They were asked about their experience with training, accessing funds, and how the program can better support youth. Three survey respondents were randomly chosen to receive a \$50 e-gift card for their participation. See Appendix C for survey questions.
- **Training data:** BC led Diversion trainings for providers to access the YDIP flex funds and collected information on numbers registered and trained.

Results

Throughout the entire program, a total of 693 YYA households across six counties were served from February 2024 through August 2025. Spokane County served the most clients followed by Clark and Walla Walla Counties (see Figure 4). Importantly, the impact of YDIP extends beyond individual YYA clients: more than 693 people in total benefitted from the program, as each YYA client may be part of a household, and stable housing supports all household members (e.g., spouse, partner, parents, children, etc.). Future data collection efforts will ask a specific question around household size to capture the full impact.

Figure 4.
Number of YDIP Clients per County

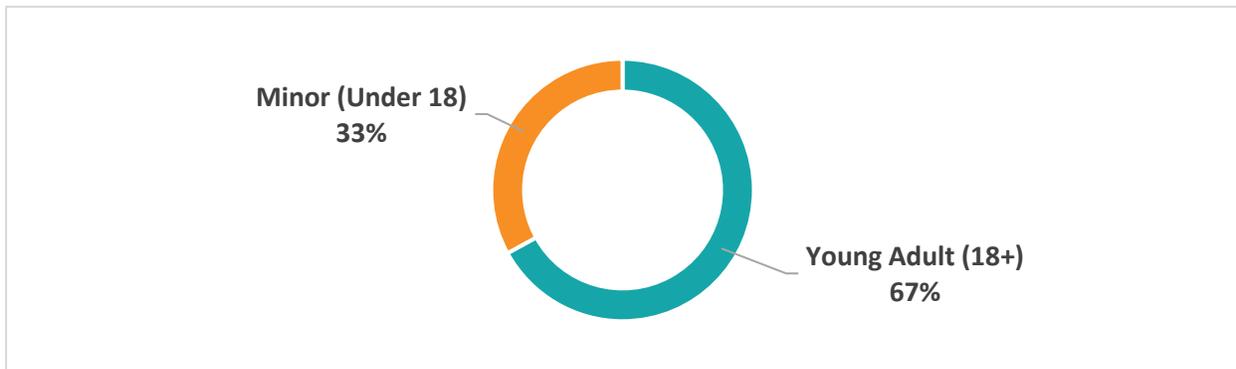


Demographics

Age and Race/Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 5 and 6, the majority of clients identified as young adults above the age of 18 at 67% ($n=466$) and Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC) at 39% ($n=273$), while 28% ($n=191$) of clients identified as White, non-Hispanic.

Figure 5.
Age of YDIP Clients



The majority of BIPOC clients identified as Hispanic/Latinx at 17% ($n=116$), followed by Black or African American at 14% ($n=98$), Multiracial at 9% ($n=65$), Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (ANHUPI) at 2% ($n=17$), and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) at 2% ($n=15$) (see Figure 7). We combined clients identifying Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander into a single category called ANHUPI because their individual counts were less than 11 which would need to be suppressed.

Figure 6.
BIPOC Status of YDIP Clients

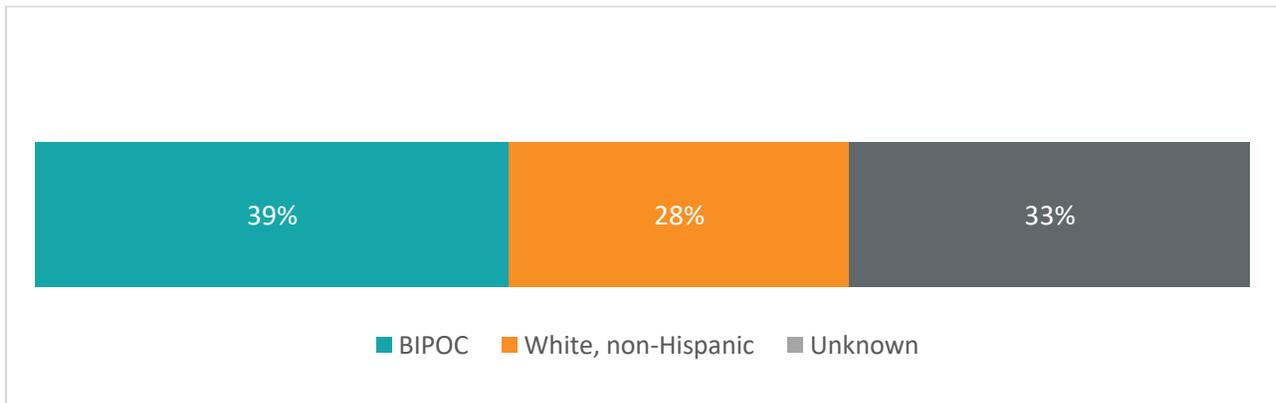
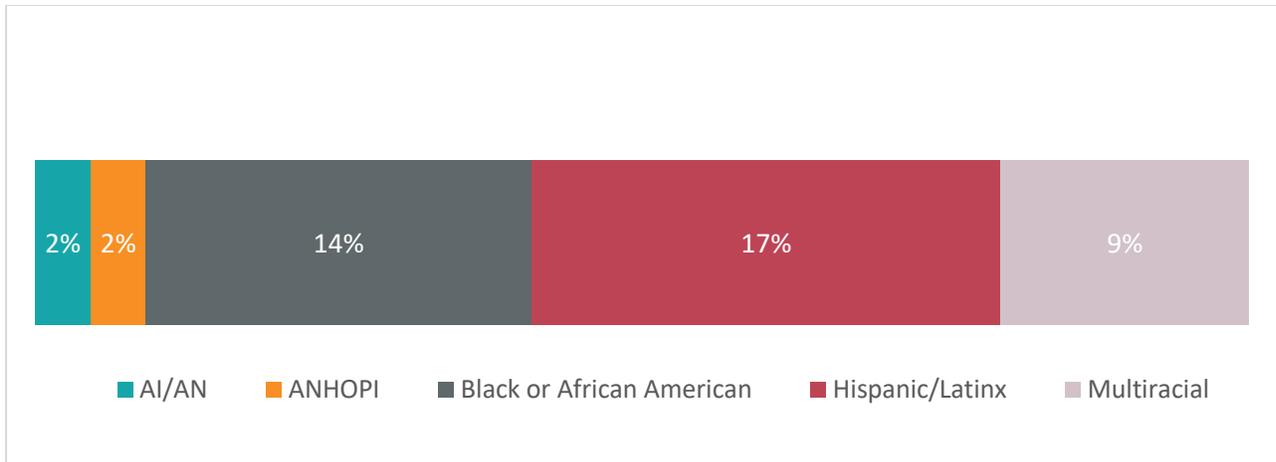


Figure 7.
Race and Ethnicity of YDIP Clients



The age distribution of YDIP clients closely aligns with statewide data collected by the **Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA)** on youth exiting systems of care in Washington State. According to DSHS, 62% of youth exiting a system of care were over the age of 18. While YDIP client ages reflected this trend, the racial and ethnic distribution did not fully align. YDIP clients identifying as AI/AN, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were underrepresented compared to statewide data.²

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Regarding sexual orientation, 12% ($n=85$) of YYA clients served by YDIP identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning, or another sexual orientation (LGBQ+) (see Figure 8). 3% ($n=23$) of clients identify as gender expansive which includes transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (see Figure 9).

Figure 8.
Sexual Orientation of YDIP Clients

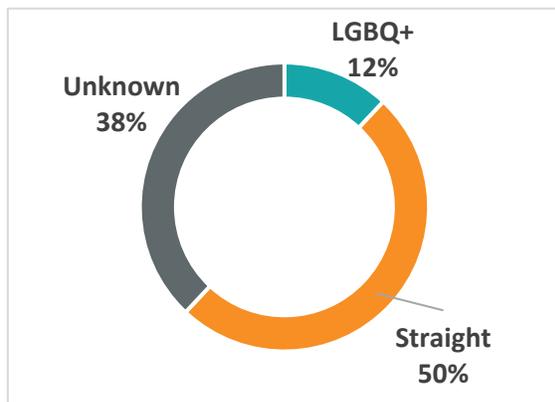
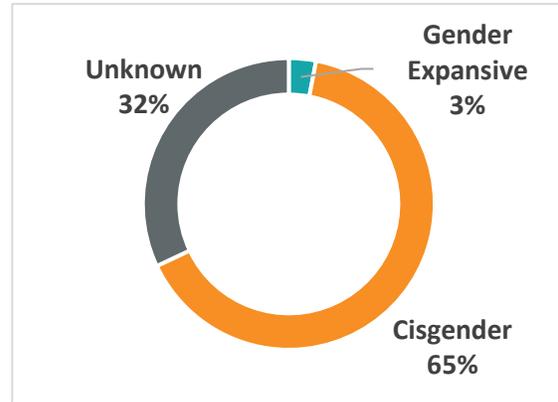


Figure 9.
Gender Identity of YDIP Clients



Among cisgender clients, 60% ($n=274$) identified as girls/women and 40% ($n=185$) identified as boys/men. This distribution is somewhat consistent with DSHS data, where 54% of exiters identified as female and 46% as male.¹ Direct comparisons for sexual orientation and gender identities beyond

² Department of Social and Health Services. (2025). *Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington State*. Retrieved from <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-254.pdf>

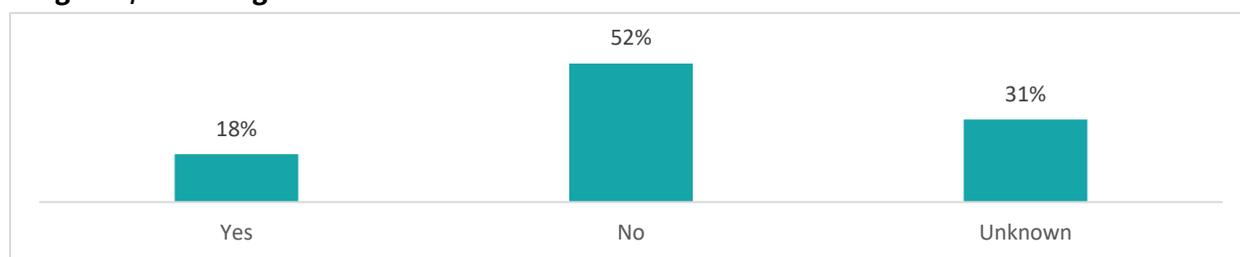
the male/female binary are not possible, as current state data systems do not collect information on these variables. National research shows that LGBTQIA+ youth make up as much as 40% of all youth experiencing homelessness.³ This suggests that LGBTQIA+ youth are underrepresented in YDIP clients which could be due to a lack of connection with providers who serve this population, or these youth choosing not to disclose this information.

Pregnant/Parenting

As shown in Figure 10, 18% (n=123) of clients served by YDIP reported being pregnant or parenting. While YDIP counts clients at the individual level, this suggests the program also indirectly supports additional household members (e.g., children) meaning the number of people benefitting from YDIP is greater than 693 clients.

Figure 10.

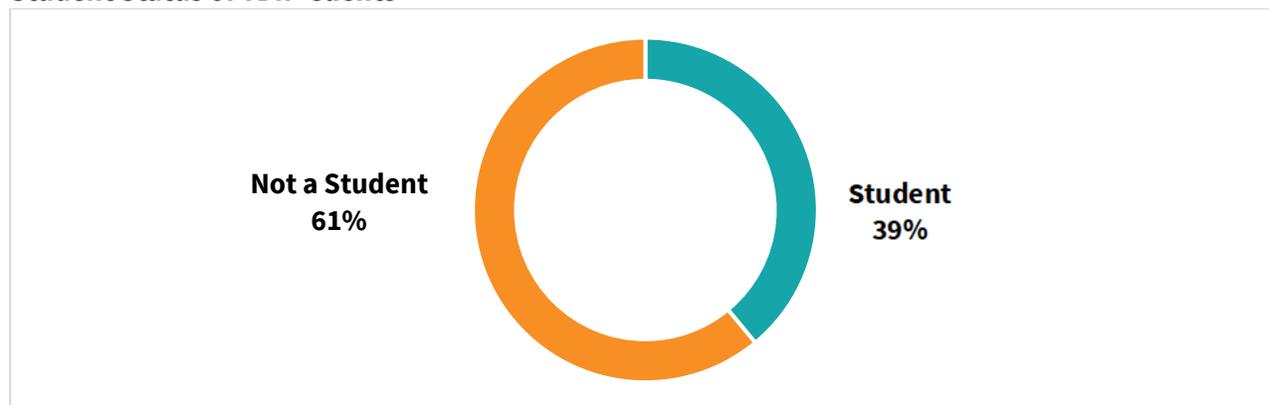
Pregnant/Parenting Status of YDIP Clients



Student Status As shown in Figure 11, 39% (n = 270) of YYA clients served by YDIP were currently students demonstrating the overlap of YDIP with the education system.

Figure 11.

Student Status of YDIP Clients



Living Situation

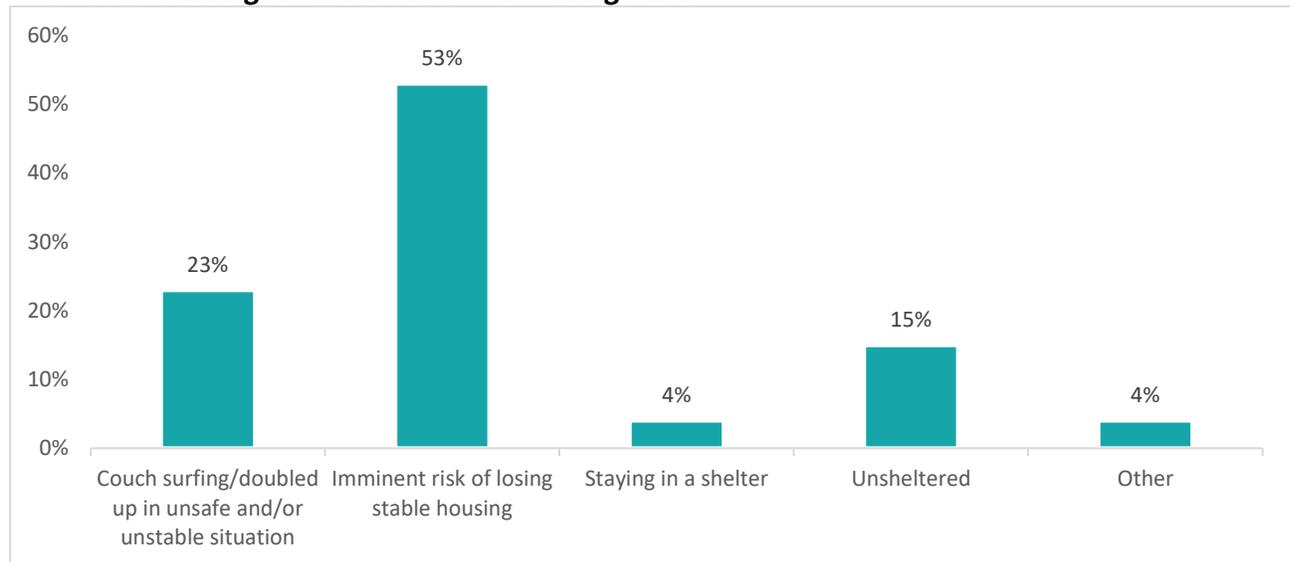
As shown in Figure 12, the largest proportion of YYA were at imminent risk of losing stable housing at the time of requesting flex funds from YDIP (53%, n=368). 42% (n=288) of clients were currently experiencing homelessness with the most common living situation in this being couch

³ National Network for Youth. (2023). *LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://nn4youth.org/learn/lgbtq-homeless-youth/#:~:text=Understanding%20LGBTQ%2B%20Homelessness&text=Research%20shows%20that%20LGBTQ%2B%20youth,9.5%25%20of%20the%20overall%20population.>

surfing/doubled up in an unsafe and/or unstable situation (23%, $n=157$), followed by living unsheltered (15%, $n=106$), and staying in a shelter (4%, $n=25$). The higher representation of couch-surfing/doubled up youth compared to youth who are unsheltered or staying in a shelter reflects the important gap YDIP fills in serving youth who don't meet the federal definition of homelessness.⁴

Figure 12.

YDIP Clients' Living Situation Prior to Receiving Funds



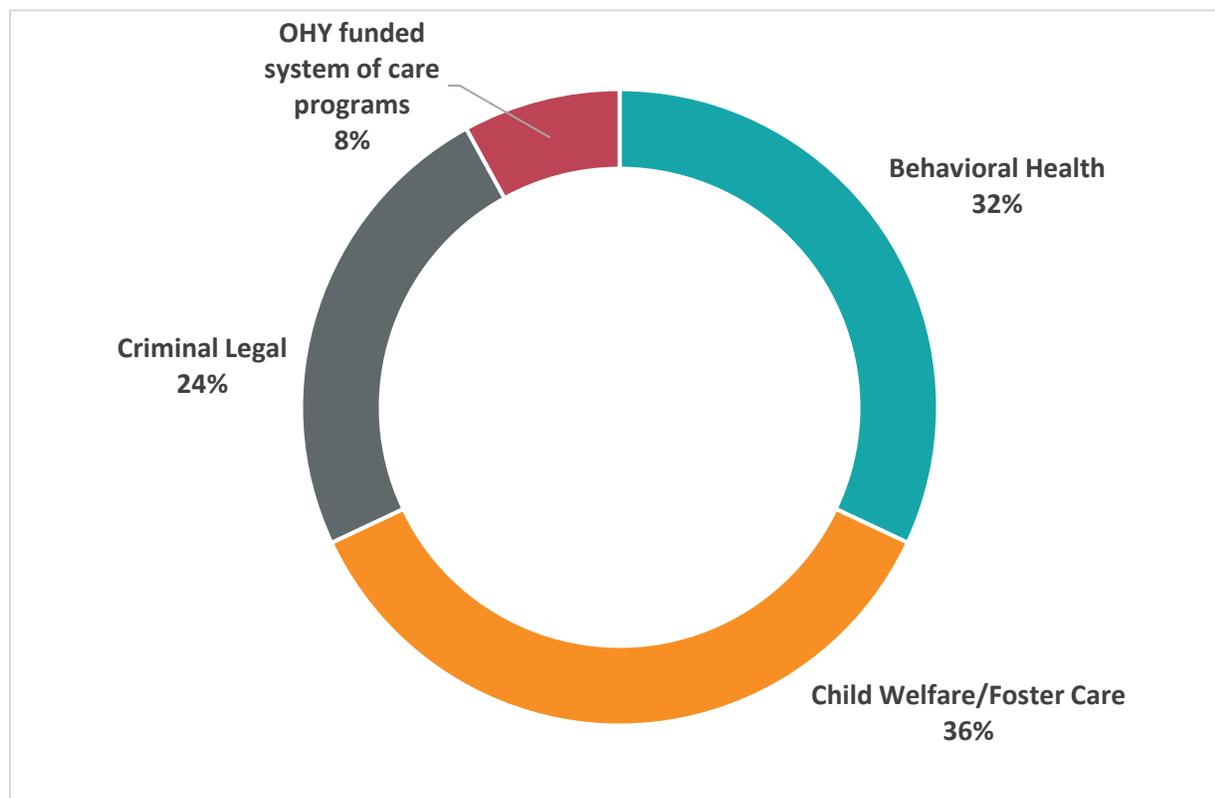
System of Care Involvement

YDIP serves clients that are currently or imminently exiting a system of care or have already exited a system of care. Those currently exiting or imminently exiting can differ based on the system of care processes they discharge from. Exits in different systems are determined by the system itself, the client's birthday, or a client choosing to no longer participate/discharge themselves. Therefore, there is no set definition of what constitutes currently exiting or imminently exiting across the systems of care

The largest proportion of YYA clients were exiting from the child welfare system/foster care at 36% ($n=249$), followed by behavioral health facilities at 32% ($n=225$), criminal legal system at 24% ($n=164$), and OHY funded licensed group facilities and system of care programs at 8% ($n=54$). Additionally, 27% ($n=186$) of clients also involved with multiple system of care, which is much higher compared to statewide data.²

⁴ [US Department of Housing and Urban Development \(2025\). Four Categories of the Homeless Definition.](#)

Figure 13.
System of Care Involvement of YDIP Clients



DSHS data show that youth exiting the criminal legal system are the most likely to experience homelessness, while those exiting foster care are the least likely.² In contrast, YDIP data indicates that most clients utilizing YDIP funds are exiting the foster care or child welfare system, and those exiting the criminal legal system are least likely to access these funds. This suggests there may be barriers preventing youth exiting the criminal legal system from accessing support and services that promote housing stability, while youth exiting foster care may have greater access to these resources.

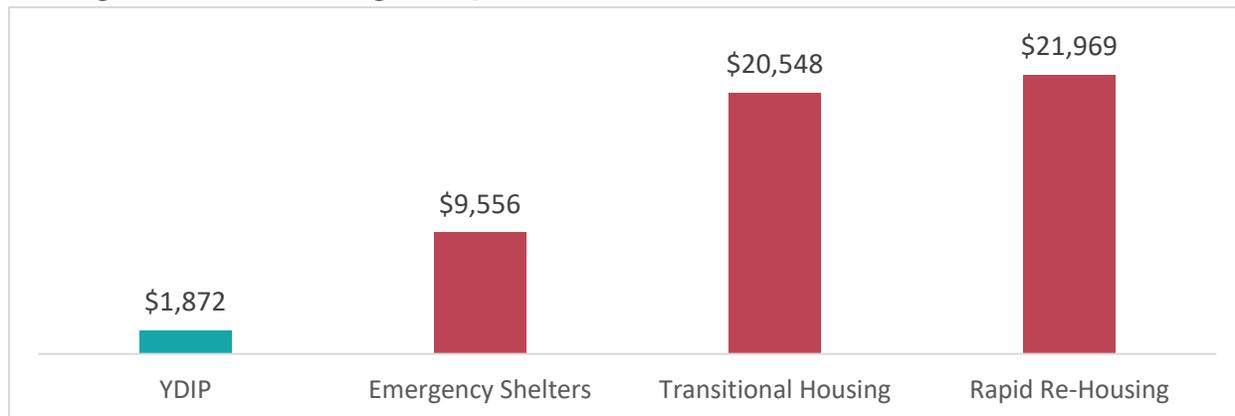
Fiscal Information

Flex Fund Spending

The Centralized Diversion Model continues to prove that Diversion is a more cost-effective approach to house young people compared to more traditional housing services. The average cost per household through YDIP was \$1,872 which is significantly lower than the cost of emergency shelters at \$9,556, transitional housing at \$20,548, and rapid re-housing at \$21,969.⁵ Additionally, it took these individuals an average three days to receive flex funds from YDIP.

⁵ Department of Commerce. (2025). Washington State Homeless System Performance County Report Card. Full dashboard available at: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/comhau/viz/DRAFTWashingtonStateHomelessSystemPerformance_CountyReportCardSFY2019/CountyReportCard

Figure 14.
Housing Interventions Average Cost per Household



Between February 2023 and August 2025, YDIP distributed a total of \$1,864,492 in flex funds across six counties (see Table 1). Spokane County had the highest flex fund spending with a total of \$410,755, followed by Clark County with \$374,298, and King County with \$340,650. King County had the highest average flex funding among all clients reflecting the area’s high cost of living and expensive housing.⁶

Table 1.
Total Flex Fund Spending Information

County	Total Flex Fund Spending	Average Flex Fund Spending (All Clients)	Average Flex Fund Spending (BIPOC Clients)
Clark	\$374,298	\$2,139	\$2,336
King	\$340,650	\$3,663	\$3,428
Pierce	\$306,019	\$1,681	\$1,634
Spokane	\$410,755	\$1,397	\$1,464
Walla Walla	\$235,362	\$1,490	\$1,453
Yakima	\$197,409	\$2,100	\$2,006
All counties	\$1,864,492	\$1,882	\$1,907

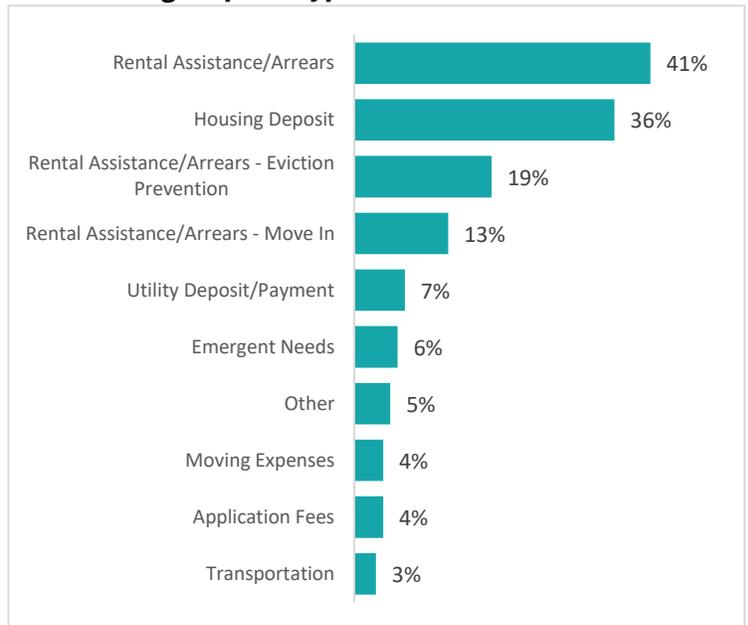
BIPOC clients had the highest average flex funding compared to other client averages (\$1,907) followed by students (\$1,887) (see Table 2). Collectively, rental assistance/arrears made up 73% of flexible fund spending with eviction prevention making 19% and move-in costs making 13%. Housing deposits ended up making up 36% of flex fund spending (see Figure 15).

⁶ [Seattle Times. \(2025\). How much do you have to make to afford Seattle ‘out of whack’ rents?](#)

Table 2.
Average Flex Fund Spending Information

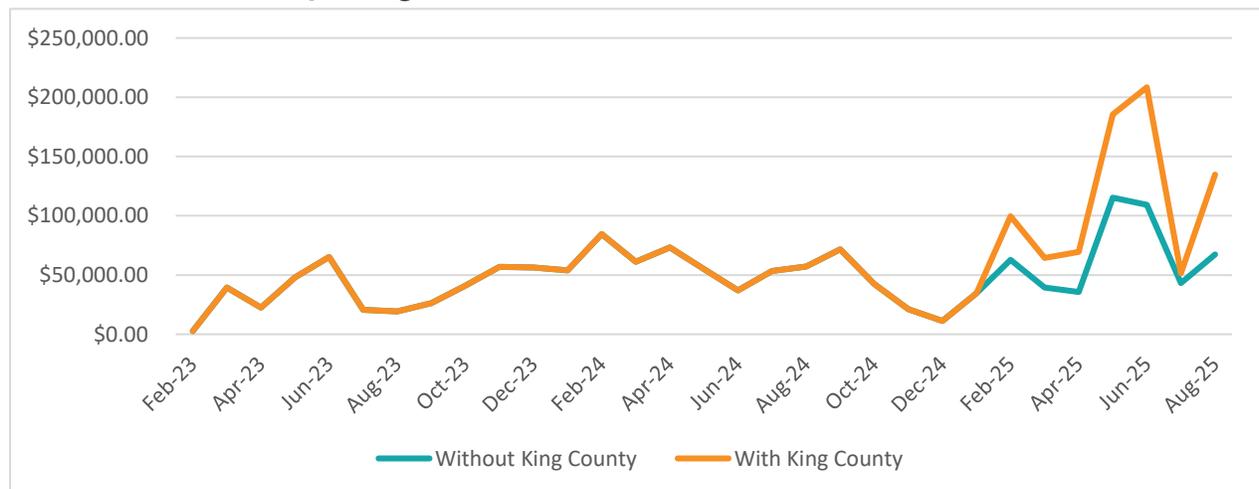
Demographic	Average flex fund spending
Overall	\$1,872
BIPOC	\$1,907
White, non-Hispanic	\$1,506
LGBQ+	\$1,576
Gender Expansive	\$1,128
Pregnant/Parenting	\$1,691
Student	\$1,887
Behavioral Health	\$1,805
Child Welfare/Foster Care	\$1,745
Criminal Legal	\$1,738

Figure 15.
Flex Funding Request Types



From February 2023 to August 2025, YDIP flex fund spending shows notable fluctuation with a sharp increase in 2025. Spending remained relatively steady through 2023 and 2024 with peaks in early and mid-2024. The most significant change occurred in 2025 when King County was fully added into the program driving a surge in spending. Monthly spending exceeded \$100,000 for the first time by May and June 2025 (\$185,623.35 and \$208,406.84) the highest levels across the entire program period. This trend remained true even without King County spending.

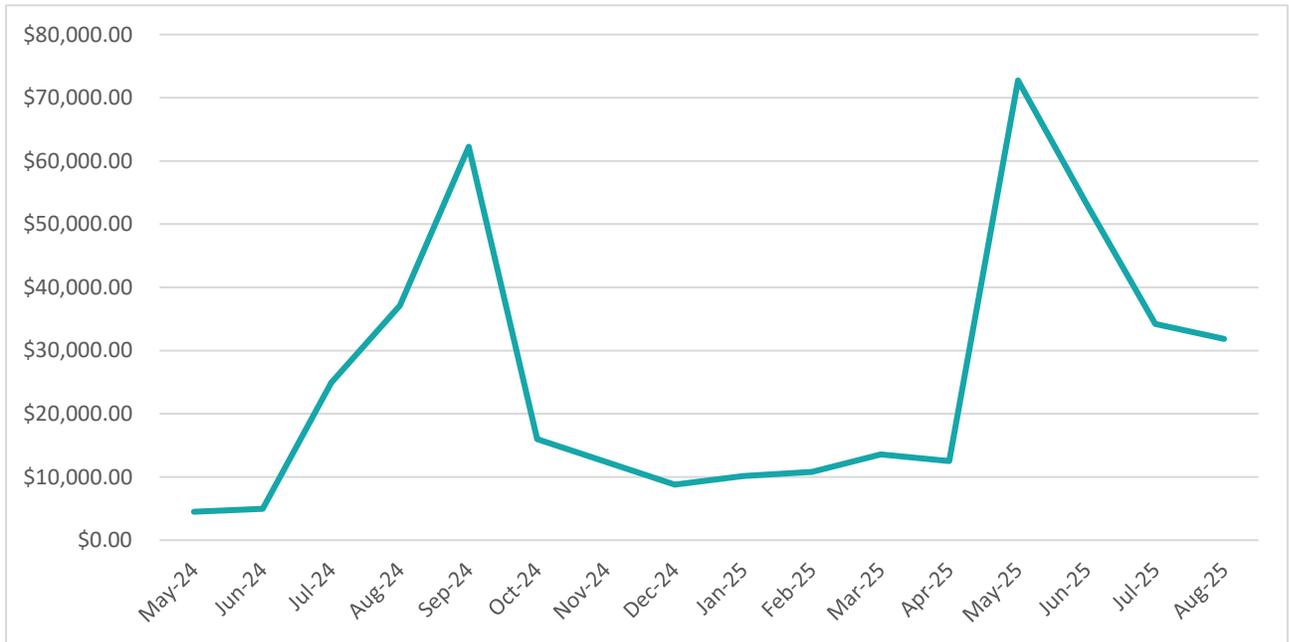
Figure 16.
Timeline of Flex Fund Spending



Eviction Prevention Data

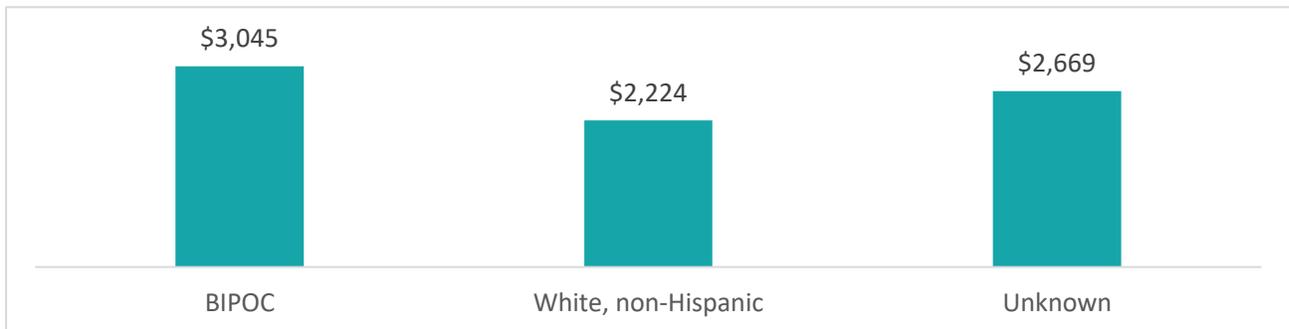
As shown in Figure 17, eviction prevention spending peaked in September 2024 (\$62,242) and May 2025 (\$72,738). This aligns with rising eviction filing across Washington State which has steadily increased since 2023.⁷ Evictions in Washington State often rise both before and after summer due to expiring pandemic-era protections, seasonal rent increases, and higher utility costs.⁸

Figure 17.
Timeline of Eviction Prevention Spending per Month



As shown in Figure 18, average spending was notably higher for BIPOC clients (\$3,045) compared to White, non-Hispanic clients (\$2,224) indicating that BIPOC youth may face greater financial barriers to maintain housing stability.

Figure 18.
Average Eviction Prevention Spending by Racial/Ethnic Group



⁷ Edmond News. (2025). *Eviction filings in Washington skyrocket*. Retrieved from <https://myedmondsnews.com/2025/06/eviction-filings-in-washington-skyrocket/>

⁸ NPR. (2022). *Eviction filings are up sharply as pandemic rental aid starts to run out*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/04/1095559147/>

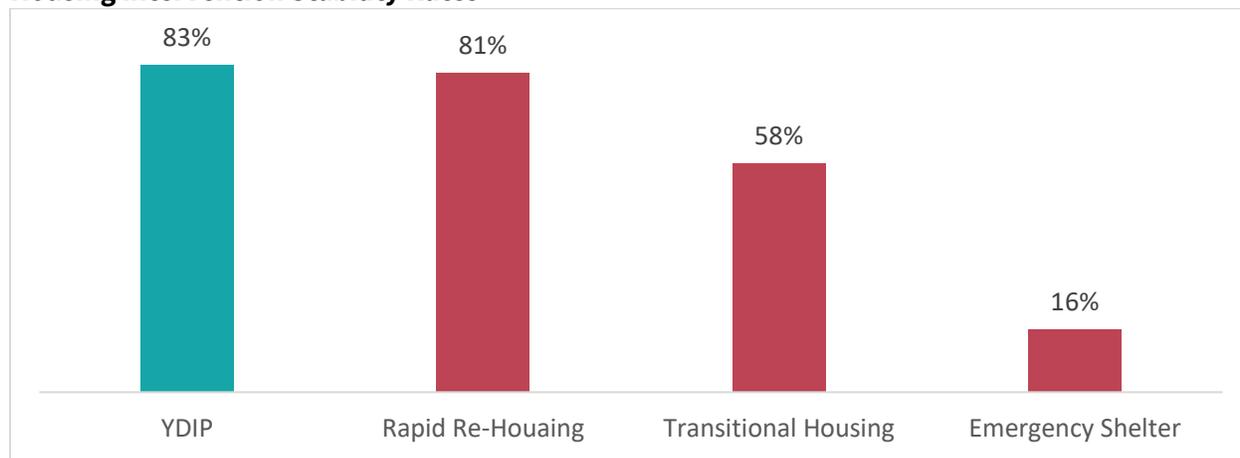
Housing Stability

The primary goal of YDIP and HB 1905 is to not only help YYA transition into safe and stable housing, but also ensure they remain in stable and safe housing over time. Nearly all YYA served by YDIP (which HMIS data is available for) stayed housed throughout the entire program. Of the 693 households served by YDIP, there is exit data for 56% ($n=387$) of households which does not include any households from Spokane. Among exited households, 83% ($n=322$) remained stability housed after being served by YDIP which is higher than other traditional housing services (as shown in Figure 19).⁵ This suggests YDIP is more effective in keeping people from entering the homelessness system and remaining stably housed compared to other interventions.

More detailed exit information by month was available for 119 clients from the Balance of State Counties (e.g., Yakima and Walla Walla). According to this data, 91% ($n = 105$) of participants after three months of receiving flex funds remained housed. This number dropped to 85% ($n = 101$) after six months and then increased to 97% ($n = 115$) after 12 months. BC will continue working with the Department of Commerce to obtain more detailed exit information for all counties utilizing YDIP.

Figure 19.

Housing Intervention Stability Rates



Client Experience

Between September 30 and October 31, 2025, BC conducted two virtual one-hour interviews with youth who have received YDIP funds.

- One YDIP client shared that they had been involved in multiple systems of care from a young age, including foster care and hospitalizations related to mental health challenges. **Without YDIP and the support of their case managers, they said they would have become homeless.** When they first connected with YDIP, they were working but were earning too much to qualify for certain assistance and too little to afford housing. Flex funds helped her cover rental costs, which stabilized their situation and allowed them to afford essential items such as food. They described the process as “smooth and easy,” saying the case managers made them feel “like a person, not just someone they were working with.” Since moving into an apartment, they have remained stably housed and hope to go to college but still faces financial challenges.

- Another YDIP client shared that they had been involved in foster care and received support from social workers as they transitioned out at age 18. Social workers assisted them with finding an apartment, updating their resume, and helped them navigate housing options. Exiting was challenging, as they faced difficulties securing housing and covering moving costs. **They were then connected to YDIP and described the process as smooth with clear communication and support.** They used YDIP flex funds to pay for rent, utilities, and late fees, which was sufficient at the time, though they wished they could have used funds for baby-related needs. Currently, they are seeking a new apartment better suited to their current needs.

While only two stories, they show how YDIP flex funds can help youth exiting systems of care achieve stability. These stories also highlight ongoing challenges. Expanding the reach and flexibility of YDIP could further strengthen its ability to help young people build lasting stability.

Fiscal Administrator Focus Group

On September 5, 2025, BC conducted a one-hour-and-a-half virtual focus group with all six FAs. They were asked about their experiences and perspectives, strengths and weaknesses of YDIP, and areas where it can be improved. FAs highlighted YDIP’s unique flexibility, which allows them to quickly support YYA with a wide range of needs. At the same time, structural housing barriers, limited collaboration with schools and criminal legal systems, and gaps in representation for LGBTQIA+ youth continue to constrain the program’s impact.

YDIP’s Flexibility and Structure are its Biggest Strength

FAs consistently highlighted that YDIP’s flexibility as well as the overall structure of the program are its greatest strengths.

- **One FA praised the program’s ability to cover a wide range of needs beyond rental assistance,** such as car repairs and utility bills, expenses that other programs cannot typically support.
- **Another FA appreciated that YDIP has no minimum age requirement,** which allows them to stabilize entire families when supporting the YYA.
- **One FA also emphasized that faster approvals and simpler processes have helped build trust between case managers, youths, and FAs.** However, FAs across counties noted ongoing confusion of requesters around YDIP and HPDF, which slows down response times and leads to HPDF requests better suited for YDIP.

Persistent Housing Barriers Limit YDIP’s Impact

While YDIP is a critical financial support, **FAs emphasized that structural housing barriers continue to limit its impact.**

- **One FA explained that landlords are often reluctant to rent to YYA** due to no credit, bad credit, or no rental history.
- **Another FA highlighted the value of offering double deposits to overcome credit-related barriers.**

- **Additionally, another FA added that “affordable” housing options are both unaffordable and frequently located in unsafe neighborhoods**, creating additional risks for YYA who have experienced trauma.
- **Finally, one FA shared that many YYA face employment stigma** due to the system of care involvement which can make sustaining housing and stability even more challenging.

Limited Collaboration with School and Criminal Legal Systems

FAs reported difficulties working with schools and juvenile justice systems to connect YYA with resources.

- **FAs explained that gaining access to schools has been slow** and relies heavily on building trust with teachers and counselors.
- **Another FA suggested certifying school counselors to submit YDIP requests directly**, stating that many schools are unaware that this option (as well as other housing resources for students) exists and instead rely exclusively on McKinney-Vento programs.
- **Two FAs reported that juvenile justice staff often refer youth elsewhere** instead of submitting YDIP requests themselves.
- **Another FA added that some juvenile system staff view housing navigation as outside their scope of work**, focusing only on justice-related needs.

Support and Capacity Needs

Across all counties, FAs praised **Building Changes** for its strong technical assistance, particularly highlighting staff responsiveness and support. However, FAs identified several areas where additional capacity would improve their roles.

- **FAs requested backup staffing to reduce stress during busy periods** or when staff are out on leave.
- **Another FA emphasized the need for clearer and earlier communication** from OHY about contract renewals and funding timelines.
- **Overall, FAs felt supported** but emphasized the need for stronger and more open communication.

Limited LGBTQIA+ Representation

While YDIP serves a racially diverse population, participants identified gaps in outreach to LGBTQIA+ youth.

- **An FA noted that YDIP reaches many BIPOC youth but fewer queer and trans youth.**
- **Another FA reported that connecting with LGBTQIA+ specific providers has helped improve access locally, but these relationships are not consistent statewide.**
- **Finally, an FA raised concerns about landlord bias**, particularly towards LGBTQIA+ youth, which limits housing options even when resources are available.

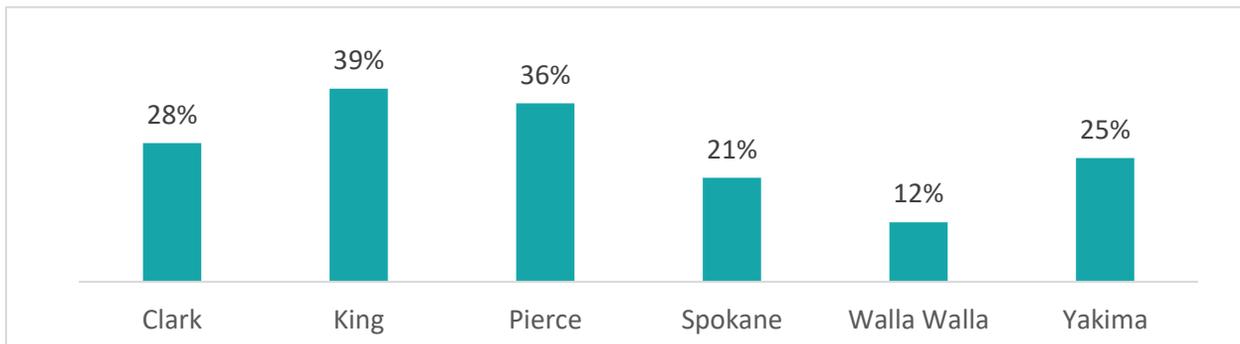
Stability and Success Look Different Across Communities

Participants had varying perspectives on what success looks like. FAs from smaller, rural counties reported fewer repeat requests, suggesting that YDIP is helping youth achieve lasting stability. In contrast FAs from larger, urban counties viewed repeat use as positive, indicating that YYA see YDIP as a trusted resource to rely on during emergencies.

Provider Survey Results

From September 12 to October 15, 2025, an online survey was available to providers trained in Diversion with access to YDIP. A total of 396 individuals from 97 different organizations have been certified to request YDIP flex funds with 52% ($n=206$) of them submitting a request. Survey outreach was conducted via email and reached an estimated 284 contacts trained by BC for a survey response rate of 24% ($n=67$). Most providers served youth in King County, followed by Pierce County, and Clark County (see Figure 20).

Figure 20.
Counties of YDIP Providers



As shown in Figure 21, most participants came from organizations focused on homeless and housing at 66% ($n=44$), followed by education/McKinney-Vento at 34% ($n=23$), and behavioral health/substance use at 33% ($n=22$). As shown in Figure 22, the main populations of focus for these organizations were youth experiencing homelessness at 58% ($n = 38$), pregnant/parenting individuals at 40% ($n = 27$), and students at 39% ($n = 26$).

Figure 21.
Organization Types of YDIP Providers

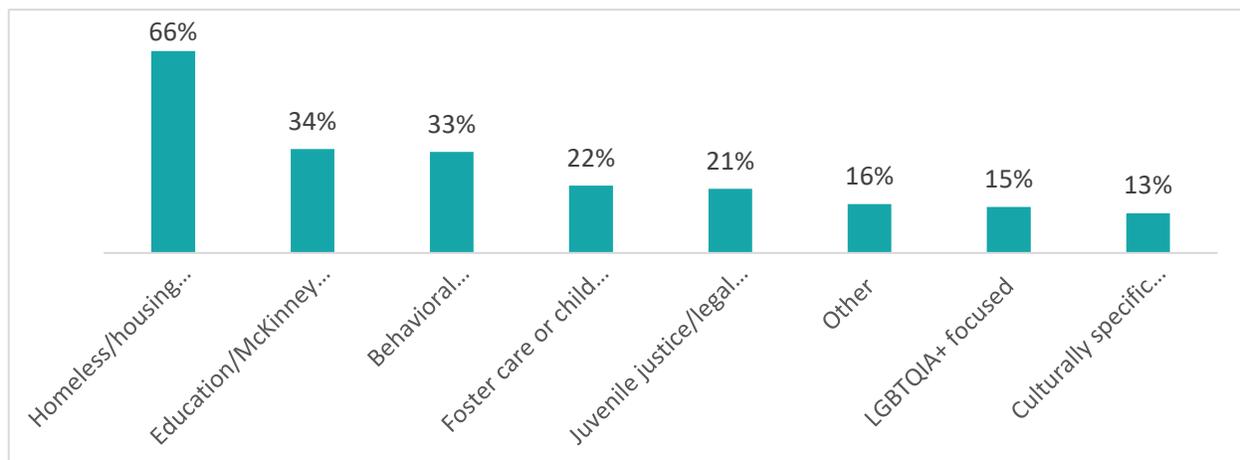
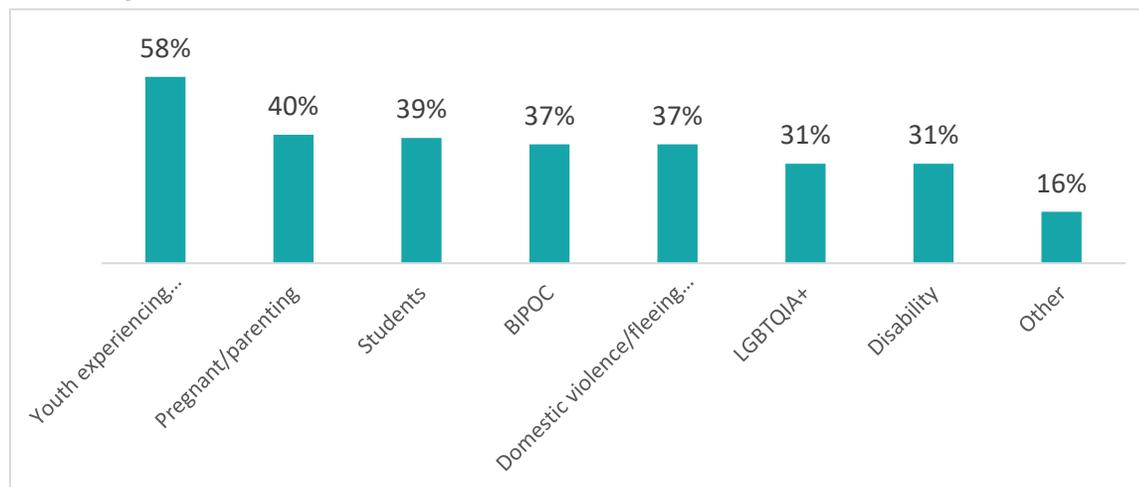


Figure 22.

Focus Populations of YDIP Providers



Access and Navigation

When asked to rate their overall experience accessing YDIP funds, 45% (*n*=30) of providers said it was excellent, followed by good at 27% (*n*=18), neutral at 16% (*n*=11), and needing improvement at 12% (*n*=8). When asked about the process of navigating the YDIP process, most participants stated it was very easy or somewhat easy at 61% (*n*=41), while 15% (*n*=10) of participants said it was somewhat difficult or very difficult, and 24% (*n*=16) were neutral.

The survey asked providers what specifically made the YDIP process feel easy as participants specifically mentioned that the process was straightforward and clear, and that communication and accessibility from FAs was easy as well. Additionally, they mentioned that the request form was easy to use, there was minimal paperwork required, response time to request was fast, and the training Building Changes provided was helpful.

When asked about what made the process difficult or any barriers that were present, 51% (*n*=34) of respondents mentioned that eligibility requirements were the biggest barrier, followed by paperwork documentation at 31% (*n*=21), and lack of time and capacity at 25% (*n*=17). When asked to describe this in more detail, providers stated that obtaining proper documentation (e.g., W-9s and list of move-in fees) from the youth, landlords, and property managers slowed down the process and believed it sometimes included unnecessary documentation collection. Providers even stated the being required to submit leases and ledgers for YDIP requests was a big barrier due to these documents oftentimes needing a payment first to be provided to a tenant. Finally, they mentioned that there wasn't clear communication around how much funds were still available in their community.

Success Stories

These stories shared by providers who took the survey demonstrate how diversion and flexible funding can make the difference between crisis and stability. They highlight the compassion, creativity, and commitment among providers who use YDIP to prevent youth homelessness and foster long-term stability for youth and their families. These are only few examples of the success stories that providers mentioned in the survey:

- **YDIP supported a parent in securing housing for themselves and children while they entered a 30-day inpatient treatment program.** With this stability, they successfully completed treatment, found employment, and recently celebrated five months of sobriety allowing their children to remain safely housed in the community they have lived in for their whole lives instead of entering state care.
- After exiting foster care in another state, a young student was sleeping in parks and couch surfing until YDIP funds were used to renovate their relative's garage into a safe bedroom space. **With this assistance, they were able to get stable enough to attend school regularly and keep a job.**
- **When a parent and children were displaced by eviction, YDIP provided swift emergency hotel funding and covered move-in costs for their next apartment.** This response prevented them from returning to homelessness or the foster care system and gave the family a smooth transition into stable housing.

Some Needs Going Unmet

Providers were asked what needs are still going unmet even with YDIP support. Providers praised the flexibility of YDIP funds; however, limiting their use to housing-related expenses does not address other barriers faced by youth exiting systems of care. Many providers mentioned that youth still needed financial assistance with things such as groceries, furniture, gas, and other solutions outside of housing. They also mentioned that to maintain their stability, some youth still needed ongoing rental assistance; access to skills and training to get stable jobs; and supportive services such as case management, financial management, counseling, budgeting, educational needs, job training, and coaching/mentoring.

Additional Supports Needed

Providers were asked what additional support would help assist youth accessing YDIP. Many providers mentioned that YDIP was not a well-known resource in the community. They suggested creating more advertising materials to share with the community and educating others to make YDIP more widely known among partners in the community. One person even suggested having a public list of YDIP providers in each community. Providers also suggested learning circles and training refreshers for providers who are already certified to access YDIP funds for ongoing development and information sharing. Finally, providers stated that more funding for YDIP in their communities would help serve youth.

Training

Training was given for providers in the six counties for those interested in accessing YDIP flex funds. Training dates and number of trainees for the entire program can be seen in Table 3. As of August 2025, 396 providers from 97 organizations have been certified to access YDIP. 52% ($n=206$) of these organizations have submitted a YDIP request.

System partners, providers, and community-based organizations learned the basics of facilitating Diversion conversations and leveraging YDIP funds for their YYA clients in a session that was interactive, engaging, and unique. The training covered three areas: Diversion philosophy, practice of Diversion, and the policies and procedures of YDIP. Upon completion, participants became fully certified to access YDIP funds for the YYA they serve. BC took intentional steps to ensure that those in the training understood how to meet YYA housing needs through YDIP. Additionally, BC trained participants how to create an environment that further engages the community in conversations around YYA experiencing a housing crisis and exiting systems of care.

Table 3.
Number of YDIP Providers Trained

Date	Certified
February 9, 2023	33
February 23, 2023	16
March 23, 2023	32
April 19, 2023	24
April 21, 2023	9
May 10, 2023	11
June 1, 2023	31
July 26, 2023	2
October 26, 2023	21
December 6, 2023	19
February 14, 2024	23
March 29, 2024	30
April 17, 2024	27
June 12, 2024	17
December 10, 2024	23
December 16–17, 2024	11
April 9, 2025	4
April 23–24, 2025	14
May 1, 2025	2
June 11–12, 2025	24
July 9, 2025	4
August 13–14, 2025	15
August 27–28, 2025	4
Total	396

The final three training sessions were facilitated by FAs in King County (August 13-14, 2025) and Spokane County (July 9, 2025 & August 27-28, 2025), not by BC. This shift is part of a broader initiative to foster greater community autonomy in facilitating and operating YDIP.

Key Takeaways

Strengths

Based on the data presented earlier, the main strengths of YDIP include:

- **Flexibility and Fast Response Times:** YDIP’s centralized Diversion model enables rapid responses to urgent housing crises with most youth receiving funds within an average of 72 hours of submitting a request. The program’s flexibility allows funds to be used for a wide-range of housing-related expenses such as rental assistance, move-in costs, utilities payments, and eviction prevention. This flexibility also gives providers and FAs the ability to tailor support to each young person's unique circumstance whether it’s preventing homelessness before it starts or removing barriers to gain housing stability.
- **Access and Navigation:** Providers across all participating counties consistently praised this model as a simple and efficient process to access and navigate. FAs highlighted Building Changes’ training and technical assistance, and providers appreciated clear communication with FAs, straightforward request forms, and minimal paperwork. This streamlined process helps maintain trust between youth, providers, and FAs.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** With an average cost of \$1,872 per household, YDIP demonstrates a highly cost-effective approach to housing stability. Compared to emergency shelters, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing, the centralized Diversion model archives efficient stabilization for a fraction of the cost. This provides evidence that Diversion-based strategies are economically impactful and sustainable.
- **Housing Stability Rates:** HMIS data showed strong housing stability rates, with 83% of clients (with available information) remaining stably housed after being served by YDIP. This is higher than data for rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelters. Additionally, Balance of State data showed that most clients served in those counties remained stably housed three, six, and 12 months after being served by YDIP. These results demonstrate that even small, flexible payments can create long-term stability. Interviews with clients reinforced these findings, with many stating YDIP was essential in their ability to remain housed and plan for the future.

Gaps

Based on the data presented earlier, the main gaps of YDIP include:

- **Limited Support for Broader Economic Stability:** While YDIP effectively addresses immediate housing crises, it does not yet address the wider economic factors that contribute to long-term economic stability. Many young people continue to face challenges related to employment, education, and access to basic needs (e.g., groceries and childcare). Without consistent support in these areas, maintaining stable housing can become difficult.
- **Underrepresentation:** While YDIP serves a racially diverse population, some BIPOC groups such as American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander remain underrepresented. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ youth are not accessing YDIP compared to their cisgender and straight counterparts despite being disproportionately affected by homelessness.
- **Limited Collaboration with Education and Criminal Legal Systems:** Based on the focus groups with Fiscal Administrators (FA), FAs reported challenges in engaging with schools

and criminal legal systems. Many school staff and juvenile system caseworkers either lack awareness of YDIP or view housing support as beyond their professional scope.

Recommendations

Sustain and Increase Funding to Expand YDIP and Build Fiscal Administrator Capacity

The centralized Diversion model has proven to be effective in serving YYA in a housing crisis across multiple counties, but many communities still lack access to Diversion services. **Sustaining and increasing funding would allow YDIP to continue serving YYA and would additionally allow more counties to implement the model and ensure all YYA in all regions across the state can benefit.** Additional funds could also support FAs (i.e., hiring backup staffing) to support them and prevent burnout.

Additionally, local funding sources (such as cities and county) should also be explored to help sustain and strengthen YDIP over time. Building local investment can create more stability, reduce reliance on state funding, and encourage shared responsibility across systems and levels of government working to prevent youth homelessness.

Advocate for Policies and Programs that Support Economic Stability

Though YDIP is effective at addressing immediate housing crises for YYA, structural economic barriers (i.e., lack of affordable housing, credit-related requirements, employment stigma) limit the ability for YYA to sustain or access housing. Policies such as guaranteed basic income (GBI), eliminating credit requirements for housing applications, minimum wage increases, rental assistance programs, and vacancy taxes are a few examples of policies that can reduce homelessness and housing instability long-term. **Initiatives that promote economic stability complemented with Diversion services could strengthen and create a more sustainable homelessness response system.**

Additionally, eviction-related requests account for a large share of YDIP spending, with seasonal surges in the spring and summer. **Establishing statewide or regional eviction prevention initiatives could provide dedicated support to households at risk of losing housing and reduce reliance on emergency responses and court filings.**

Require Housing Navigation Supports into Systems of Care

YYA exiting systems of care may not be connected to housing resources until after the exit occurs. Though the Rapid Response Team (outlined in HB 1905) may provide navigation support, there isn't always a requirement for full-scale housing navigation in every case. Additionally, the system of care staff may not see providing housing navigation as critical to their role. **Embedding housing navigation into discharge planning across systems of care prior to release would ensure YYA have safe and stable housing options as they transition out of care.** This directly aligns and advances the intent of HB 1905 and strengthens statewide coordination with the housing/homelessness systems.

Strengthen Coordination with Education and Criminal Legal Systems

FAs reported persistent challenges getting school and criminal legal staff to submit requests, often because those staff do not view housing navigation as part of their scope. Creating pathways like incentivizing school counselors, case managers, and other staff to submit YDIP requests could streamline access in these systems. **Building stronger system-level agreements and partnerships can help reduce gaps and ensure youth are connected to resources at multiple points.**

Expand Outreach and Partnerships with BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ Organizations

While YDIP reaches a racially diverse population, there remains an underrepresentation of certain BIPOC groups and LGBTQIA+ accessing and utilizing funds. **Expanding training opportunities and intentionally partnering with organizations that serve these populations could increase equitable access and utilization.** This would help address housing barriers that disproportionately impact BIPOC and queer youth and young adults.

Simplify Documentation Requirements

Providers identified documentation requirements as a significant challenge that can delay or even prevent young people from accessing funds. Collecting W-9s, leases, and ledgers from landlords or property managers takes time, especially when youth have limited documentation or are facing urgent timelines. **Simplifying documentation expectations would make the process faster, more flexible, and more equitable for YYA.** Reducing these administrative barriers would help ensure that youth in crisis can access assistance quickly and that providers spend less time navigating paperwork and more time supporting young people directly.

Next Steps

As Building Changes continues to administer and oversee YDIP, these are areas that can be expanded and built on to increase the impact, awareness, and fidelity of the program. These include:

- **Enhancing Data Systems and Transparency: Building Changes plans to update the data infrastructure for YDIP by transitioning from JotForm to [Forward](#) to simplify data entry, data reconciliation, and increase access to real-time data for FAs.** Additionally, Building Changes is also developing a public-facing Tableau dashboard to visualize YDIP outcomes and promote the impact of the program to funders, policymakers, and the general public.
- **Advancing Local Advocacy and Awareness: Building Changes (alongside OHY and FAs) should partner and build local advocacy and outreach campaigns to increase awareness of YDIP among community organizations, funders, elected officials, and the general public.** Highlighting success stories, sharing data insights, and creating shareable materials will help grow broader community understanding of Diversion as an effective prevention and barrier removal strategy to homelessness. These campaigns can also attract local investment and buy-in which will strengthen long-term sustainability beyond state-level funding.
- **Strengthening Client Feedback and Longitudinal Data Collection: Building Changes should develop a plan for a consistent system for collecting feedback and tracking outcomes at three, six-, and 12-months post-support outside of HMIS.** Regularly engaging

youth through surveys or interviews will ensure YDIP remains responsive, equitable, and grounded in lived experience. This will also allow for more success stories and case studies of clients to be shared with the broader community.

Appendix A: Individual Interview Questions with YDIP Clients

1. Can you tell me about what system of care you were involved with? What was it like to exit that system? Looking back is there anything that would've improved the transition process?
2. How did you hear about YDIP or flex funding?
3. What was your initial Diversion conversation with your provider like? Did you feel respected and heard? Was there anything about the process that was difficult or confusing?
4. What did you use the flex funds for and how did that support you at that time? Did you feel like the funding was enough?
 - a. Follow-Up: If not, what would've helped more?
5. Where are you at right now in terms of housing stability? What has helped you stay stable, or what's made it hard to stay stable?
6. Are there any other supports you currently need or wish you had available when transitioning from the system of care?
7. If a friend or someone in a similar situation asked you about this program, what would you tell them?
8. Do you have any advice for staff or program designers to make the program more helpful?
9. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience that we haven't talked about?

Appendix B: Fiscal Administrator Focus Group Questions

1. How has the implementation of YDIP evolved in your community since the pilot year? Are there new systems, partners, or workflows that have helped? Are there areas that are still difficult?
2. From your perspective, what are the biggest needs among youth exiting systems of care in your community? Have these shifted since year 1?
Does the current YDIP flex fund structure meet those needs?
3. How are collaborations with providers and systems partners (e.g., DYCF, schools, juvenile justice, behavioral health facilities) working? Where have these partnerships been successful? Where do you see disconnects?
4. What additional support would make your role as an FA easier (either from Building Changes or OHY)?
5. Thinking about the future of YDIP, what does success look like for you?
6. What is working well with YDIP? How does the process support you in serving your community?
7. What are the gaps you are seeing with YDIP? What processes are barriers to serving your community?
8. How well do you think YDIP is currently serving underserved communities (e.g., BIPOC, trans and queer youth, etc.)? What strategies have worked well at reaching these groups? What barriers do you think exist?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share about YDIP or your experience as an FA?

Appendix C: Provider Survey Questions

1. What is your agency affiliation?
2. Name
3. Email
4. What county does your agency serve (select all that apply)?
5. Which options best describe the systems which your agency operates in (select all that apply)?
6. Which population does your agency focus on if any (select all that apply)?
7. How would you rate your overall experience accessing YDIP funds?
8. How easy or difficult is it for you to navigate the YDIP process?
9. If the process is difficult, what makes it challenging?
10. If the process feels easy, what makes it work well for you?
11. What barriers, if any, prevent you and/or your clients from accessing YDIP funds (select all that apply)?
12. How is the intake process for HMIS?
13. Do you have any specific success stories about a client or clients who have benefited from YDIP? If so, please describe it (please don't provide any identifiable information such as names and date of birth).
14. What client needs are still going unmet even with YDIP support?
15. How effective was the YDIP certification training in preparing you to submit requests and navigate the YDIP process?
16. What would improve the training or make it more useful?
17. What additional support would help better assist youth in accessing YDIP?
18. Is there anything you haven't had a chance to share with us that you would like to share now?