Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF)

Program Evaluation Report, August 2020 - December 2025

Prepared by Devin Noel-Endres, MS
Director of Measurement,
Learning & Evaluation

September 2026

BUILDING CHANGES

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Parnership and Funding

Special Thanks To Our Fiscal Administers

Blue Mountain Community Foundation
Council for the Homeless
Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington
Family Support Center of South Sound
Olympic Community Action Programs
North Sound ACH
Northwest Youth Services
Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington
Yakima Neighborhood Health Services
YMCA Social Impact Center

From Building Changes Staff

As a policy researcher my work has been dedicated to improving the health, well-being, and development of people across different communities. Throughout my career I have helped government agencies and community-based organizations leverage research and data to create better policies and programs. Over the last two years I have led the design and evaluation of programs that provide guaranteed income and flexible funding to youth and families at risk of homelessness or currently experiencing homelessness. Through this work, I have seen the tremendous impact that cash assistance programs like HPDF can have at transforming the lives of youth across the state.

— Devin Noel-Endres | Director of Measurement, Learning, & Evaluation

I had been a direct service provider for several years before being introduced to the concepts and philosophies of diversion. After a year of system change work at the local level, HPDF was introduced and the values alignment between the Functional Zero and centralized diversion strategies was very clear. I have spent the last three years training providers on the concepts within the centralized diversion framework and the intention behind its role in functional zero initiative work. I believe very strongly in the efficacy of this dynamic because I have seen first-hand the impact it can have for young people accessing housing support across community systems.

— Julius Heinrichson | Youth and Young Adult Diversion Portfolio Specialist

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Executive Summary

The Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF), launched in August 2020, is designed to prevent and reduce homelessness for youth and young adults (YYA) between the ages of 12 to 24 who are unaccompanied, doubled up/coach surfing, unsheltered, and unstably housed. HPDF operates in ten counties across Washington State: Clallam, Clark, Jefferson, Pierce, Skagit, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, and Yakima. HPDF provides flexible financial assistance to divert YYA away from the homelessness response system, while not contributing to the overcapacity of that system.

This report evaluates the impact of HPDF from August 2020 to December 2025, combining both quantitative and qualitative data from request forms, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Findings reveal that HPDF is a highly effective and cost-efficient intervention that prevents youth homelessness and promotes immediate housing stability. Several key findings emerged from the evaluation goal of achieving Functional Zero for youth homelessness. Continued and increased financial investment, expanded outreach and marketing, and integration with supportive services will be critical to maximizing the long-term impact of HPDF for all communities across Washington State.

HPDF is highly cost-efficient.

The program served 2,713 households and distributed approximately $6.9 million in flexible funding across the state. With an average cost of $1,683 per household, HPDF is highly cost-efficient compared to traditional housing interventions like emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing. Funds are typically disbursed within 72 hours, allowing for timely intervention in urgent situations.

HPDF provides immediate and long-term stability.

The program demonstrates strong housing outcomes with 93% of households (for which data is available) exiting into permanent housing. Returns to homelessness remained relatively low, with 3% returning within 3 months, increasing to 11% within a year, and 18% within 2 years. These findings indicate that HPDF is highly effective in achieving immediate housing stability and supporting longer-term outcomes for most participants.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

HPDF is increasingly preventing homelessness before it starts.

The majority of clients were currently at risk of experiencing homelessness rather than currently experiencing homelessness before they receive flexible funds. HPDF also reaches diverse populations, with 53% of clients identifying as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). However, disparities remain among American Indian/Alaska Native and LGBTQIA+ youth, suggesting the need for more targeted outreach and engagement.

HPDF is delivering meaningful results for communities.

Qualitative findings from clients, providers, and Fiscal Administrators (FAs) highlight HPDF's flexibility, speed, and youth-centered approach. Clients consistently reported feeling respected and supported during Diversion conversations and described HPDF as transformative in helping them achieve housing stability. Providers and FAs emphasized that HPDF is one of the most effective tools available in their communities, particularly due to its ability to address housing crises immediately in ways that other resources cannot.

Conclusion

Data from this evaluation demonstrates that HPDF is highly effective, sustainable, and scalable model for preventing youth homelessness. HPDF's Centralized Diversion Fund model strengthens cross-system collaboration, expands access to flexible funding, and aligns with Washington State's broader goal of achieving Functional Zero for youth homelessness. Continued and increased financial investment, expanded outreach and marketing, and integration with supportive services will be critical to maximizing the long-term impact of HPDF for all communities across Washington State.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Table of Contents

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Abbreviations

AI/AN	American Indian/Alaska Native
AWHWA	Away Home Washington
BC	Building Changes
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
C4FO	Communities for Functional Zero
FA	Fiscal Administrator
FZ	Functional Zero
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HPDF	Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund
LGBQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer/Questioning
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Other Identities
MENA	Middle Eastern or North African
NHOPI	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
OHY	Washington State Department of Commerce Office of Homeless Youth
PSY	Point Source Youth
THAP	Targeted Housing Assistance Program
WYFF	Washington Youth and Families Fund
YBNL	Youth By-Name List
YDIP	Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project
YYA	Youth and Young Adult

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Overview

The Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF) is a program of Building Changes in partnership with the Washington State Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth (OHY). HPDF was originally under A Way Home Washington (AWHWA) before it closed as an organization in 2024. The program aims to prevent and reduce homelessness for youth and young adults (YYA) between the ages of 12 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing stable housing. HPDF combines the Diversion approach and the development of Centralized Diversion Funds to provide YYA clients with access to a one-time flexible funding source to promote housing stability.

This project is funded through the Washington State Legislature, OHY, and private funding from the Schultz Family Foundation. Launched in August 2020, HPDF was the first Centralized Diversion Fund program specifically for YYA in the United States.

What is Diversion?

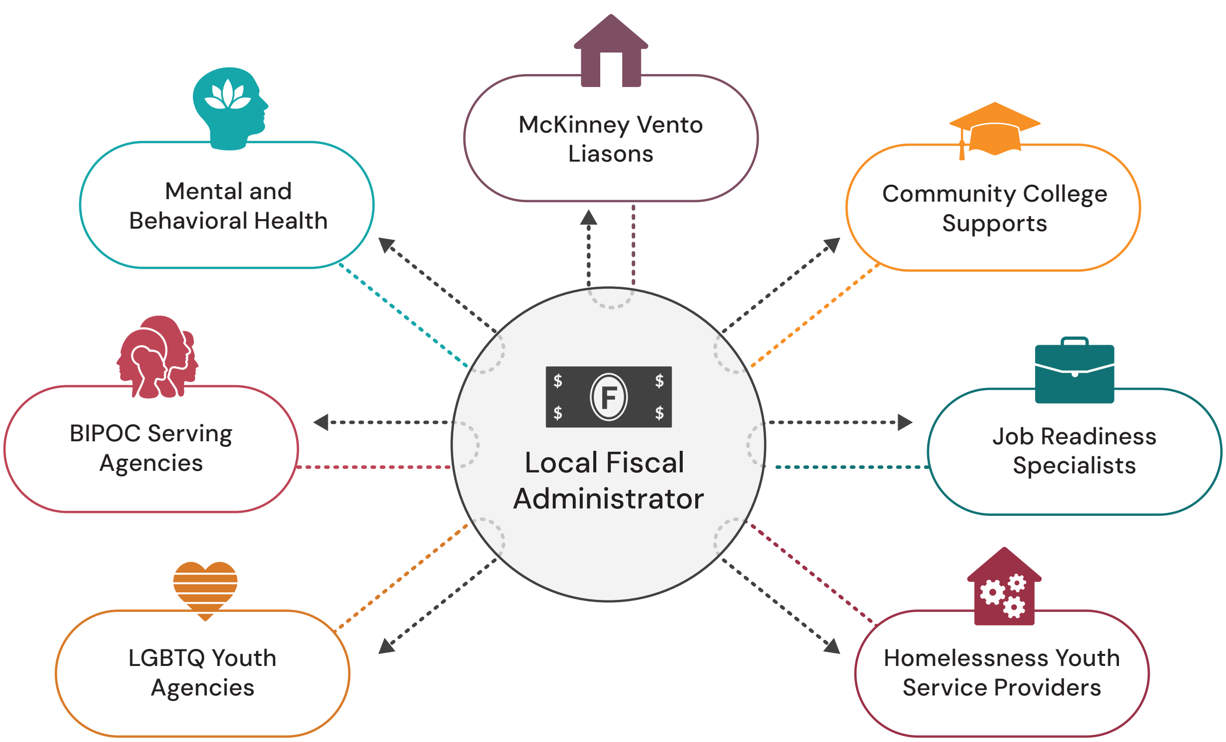
Diversion is an approach used to assist individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis to quickly move into stable housing. This is achieved by combining conversations that explore housing solutions with the provision of flexible funding, when needed. These conversations aim for the service provider, trained in Diversion, to listen and talk with an individual or family and collaborate to develop a housing plan in an empowering and client-led way. **The goal of Diversion is to identify points of connection in one's own community to identify 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.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

What is the Centralized Diversion Fund?

A Centralized Diversion Fund model aims to increase access to funding in communities while making flexible funding more accessible to those communities. Through this model, community-based organizations, service providers, and practitioners supporting a housing crisis from across roles and agencies are trained in Diversion and become certified to access flex funds from a single 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 provide an alternative to traditional Diversion services, whereby flexible funding access and availability is dependent upon the organization and specific contract funding.

Structure of HPDF Partnerships



The overall goal with 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 they already frequent, from providers with which they are working and trust. By (1) creating partnerships between the diverse network of organizations and practitioners supporting those in a housing crisis; and (2) activating the infrastructure of FAs to manage and disburse flexible funding, this model ensures that practitioners can focus on facilitating Diversion conversations to find creative housing solutions with clients. This also promotes the best practices of Diversion to a broader ecosystem of organizations, traditional housing providers, and nontraditional providers such as those in job readiness, behavioral health, juvenile rehabilitation, and more (see *Figure 1*).

HPDF is built on two core elements: (1) exploring and identifying housing solutions that are driven by the young person, and (2) providing low-barrier, flexible, and immediate funding to make those housing plans happen when funding is needed. The HPDF process begins with a creative housing conversation between trained Diversion providers and clients. Working as thought partners to explore all housing solutions available, the young person ultimately identifies the option(s) that work best for them. The HPDF process is illustrated in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2

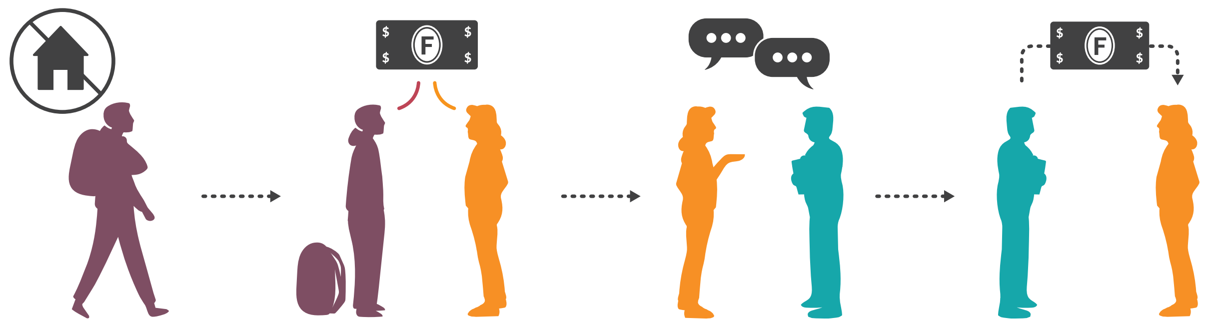
Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF) Process

YYA is currently experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing stable housing

YYA has a Diversion conversation with a community-based organization to indenty flex funds as a housing solution

Community-based organization or provider connects with an HPDF fiscal administrator

HPDF fiscal administrator distributes flex funds to third-party to meet YYA's self-identified housing solution



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

- Between the ages of 12 – 24
- Residing in a community that has HPDF
- Income is at or below 50% of the area medium income (AMI)
- Currently a young person experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness
- Not currently enrolled in a publicly funded housing project (e.g., Rapid Re-Housing, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing)

The Implementation and Expansion of HPDF

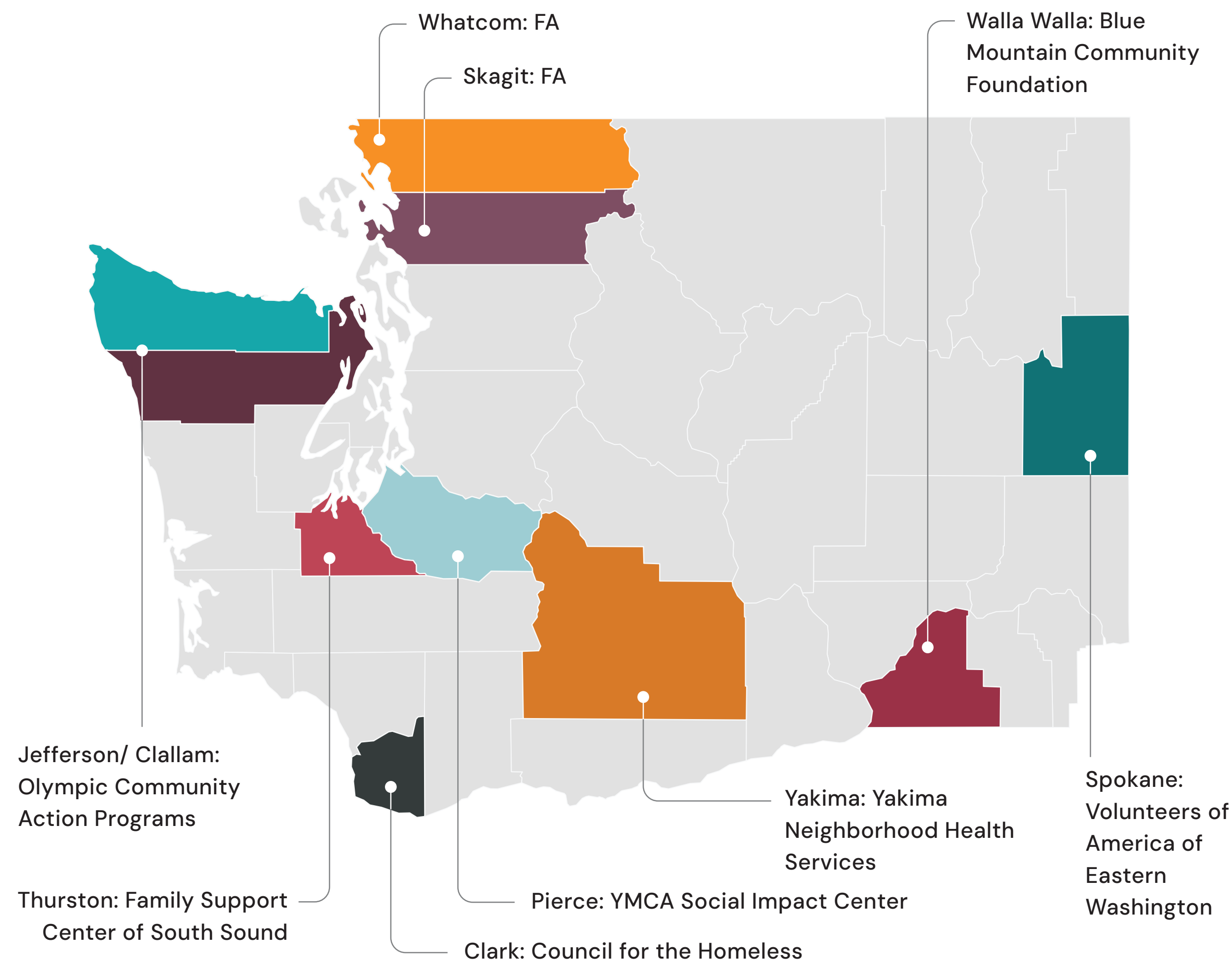
HPDF was modeled after the first ever Centralized Diversion Fund program in Washington state (known as the Centralized Diversion Fund) which began in 2019 by Africatown International and Building Changes to serve families and adult individuals in King County.[1] Then, in 2020 as part of their Anchor Community Initiative, AWHWA launched HPDF in four communities across the state including Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties. This made HPDF the first Centralized Diversion Fund program specifically for YYA in the nation. In December 2022, Clark County became the fifth community to establish HPDF expanding the program into southwest Washington.

AWHWA led successful advocacy efforts in 2022 and 2023 aimed at expanding HPDF to all nine Anchor Communities and closing funding gaps to prevent lapses in HPDF utilization where the program was currently operating. With the support of community partners across the state, AWHWA successfully secured a 400% increase in public funding for HPDF, bringing the total budget up from $1 million for 2021 and 2022 ($500,000 annually), to $5 million for 2023 and 2024 ($2.5 million annually). With these expanded dollars, AWHWA worked with OHY to expand HPDF to five additional communities including: Clallam, Jefferson, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties. With this expansion, HDPF is now operating in 10 counties across Washington in total (see *Figure 3*).

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

Figure 3

Map of HPDF and Fiscal Administrators



In the 2025 legislative session, the biennium funding for HPDF was reduced from $5 million to $4 million ($2 million annually). OHY was able to appropriate $1 million to backfill the money that was lost.

Laying the Groundwork for Future Diversion Projects

HPDF has had state-level impacts in housing first and Diversion opportunities, laying the groundwork and proving the success of the centralized approach to Diversion for young people. In 2022, House Bill 1905 (2021-22) established prevention and Diversion dollars for young people exiting systems of care (child welfare, behavior health, and juvenile rehabilitation) in need of housing which was inspired in part by HPDF's proven successes from its inception in 2020. In August 2022, AWHWA and Building Changes partnered to design and implement the new Diversion project, the Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project (YDIP). Active since February 2023, YDIP demonstrates the potential for iterating the centralized Diversion model for even more specific populations within YYA homelessness.

Additionally, Point Source Youth (PSY) is currently piloting a Direct Cash Transfer prevention program called the Targeted Housing Assistance Program (THAP) model after HPDF. THAP aims to provide young people at risk of experiencing homelessness access to one-time financial assistance paired with youth-driven supportive services provided by community-based organizations. PSY is currently piloting this program in seven counties across the United States in the states of Oregon, California, Arizona, Texas, New York, Georgia, and Michigan.

What is Functional Zero for Youth?

Functional Zero (FZ) is both a goal and a measurable benchmark for communities to end homelessness in their community. It is achieved when the number of people who are newly homeless is lower than the number who are exiting homelessness into permanent housing.[2] FZ is often misunderstood to be a literal number meaning that no young person will ever experience homelessness. However, it is not literal zero but describes a system condition. **A community has**

2. Project Home. (2026). What is Functional Zero—and How Do Communities Achieve It?

reached FZ for youth homelessness when it has built a system that can reliably prevent, identify, respond to, and resolve youth homelessness so that it becomes rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

FZ does not mean: (1) zero youth ever experience homelessness, (2) the system is perfect, (3) the data is flawless or complete, and (4) there is no fluctuation in need. Instead, it means the system is strong enough to function under real world conditions (such as system complexity, client inflow, uncertainty) without becoming overwhelmed and ineffective. A youth homelessness system operating at FZ can do the following things consistently:

- Identify youth quickly through multiple access points
- Connect youth to safe, developmentally appropriate housing without delay
- Resolve homelessness quickly when it occurs
- Prevent returns through stabilization and support
- Absorb new inflow without becoming overwhelmed
- Functions even when conditions change

This is a national framework that was pioneered and is being advanced by Community Solutions through its Built for Zero Initiative which includes more than 100 communities throughout the United States working to measurably and equitably end homelessness.

Communities for Functional Zero (C4F0)

Communities for Functional Zero (C4F0) is Washington State's coordinated movement to achieve FZ for youth and young adults between the ages of 12-24 who are experiencing homelessness. Rather than managing homelessness through siloed programs, communities are working together to end it at the system level. The current communities involved include all 10 of the counties that have HPDF.

C4F0 communities use accurate, real-time data to understand who is experiencing homelessness and how the system is performing. A key tool is the monthly Youth By-Name List (YBNL), which tracks each young person currently experiencing homelessness in a community. This list allows communities to measure inflow (new youth entering homelessness), outflow (youth exiting to stable housing), returns to homelessness, and the length of time youth remain unhoused. This also allows other systems change efforts. such as addressing disproportionately-experienced-homelessness by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC YYA, as well as including young people as meaningful decisionmakers to make achieving FZ more possible.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

How HPDF Contributes to Functional Zero

HPDF is designed to act as a primary tool for driving the FZ goals of the C4F0 initiative at the local level by adding capacity to the homelessness response system, creating a pathway for cross-system partners to support housing needs, and expanding the possibilities for housing stabilization solutions for young people. Representatives from fiscal administrator organizations are expected to participate in local convenings around C4F0 work to ensure that the utilization of HPDF dollars work in alignment with the goals and efforts of the community driven initiative work. HPDF's Centralized Diversion Fund model operates in alignment with the values of C4F0 by having a youth-driven, communitywide collaboration to reach an end to YYA homelessness.

HPDF directly contributes to the goals of FZ through:

Preventing inflow into the homelessness response system:

HPDF directly supports this goal through Diversion conversations and one-time flexible financial assistance. Diversion conversations are youth-driven and allow providers to explore housing options that exist outside of the homelessness response system. Flexible funds are then used to remove specific financial barriers preventing youth entering the system.

Reducing the length of homelessness:

HPDF's approach shortens the duration of homelessness and can resolve housing crises quickly. The Centralized Diversion Fund model allows for trained providers across multiple sectors to access funds which are typically disbursed within 72 hours of making the request. This rapid response prevents prolonged stints of homelessness and allows YYA to access safe and stable housing.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Building system capacity and coordination:

HPDF helps increase a community's capacity to respond to housing crises by strengthening partnerships across a community. Providers in education, workforce development, the business sector, juvenile rehabilitation, and other systems can be trained in Diversion and access flex funds. This reduces barriers that can arise due to constant referrals and allows youth to succeed through support from trusted relationships rather than having to navigate multiple systems.

Advancing equity in youth outcomes:

HPDF's approach reduces disparities by being low-barrier, youth-centered, and flexible. This support is critical in supporting youth who are BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and furthest away from justice who may experience discrimination and distrust in the homelessness response system.

> *Thank you for allowing us to be partners with this funding source. We have used thousands of dollars from HPDF to support our families, and it can make a difference for so many of them."*
>
> – Community Provider from Clark County

Evaluation

This evaluation of HPDF covers the entire program following the first submission from August 2020 to December 2025. Building Changes aimed to address these key questions for the evaluation:

What outcomes has HPDF produced over five years and how has it contributed to preventing homelessness for YYA in Washington?

How has HPDF contributed to housing stability for YYA who received HPDF within 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 18 months, and 2 years post support?

How do clients describe their experience with the Diversion process and how receiving flex funds has impacted their lives?

What have providers and FAs learned about the HPDF process and implementation?

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.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Request form data:

Building Changes 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, flex funding amount and characteristics, pregnant or parenting status, student status, and domestic violence survivor status. Some of the data may be 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 HPDF.

Individual interviews with YDIP clients:

Between October 2025 to January 2026, Building Changes conducted three virtual 1-hour interviews with youth who have received HPDF funds. Building Changes reached out to providers who then reached out to clients. They were asked about their experience of accessing HPDF funds, their experience going through the Diversion process, how they're currently doing, 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 January 6 and 7, 2025, Building Changes conducted two hour-and-a half virtual focus group with all 10 FAs. They were asked about their experiences and perspectives on their role as an FA, strengths and weaknesses of HPDF, and areas where it can be improved. See *Appendix B* for the discussion questions.

Survey of providers who accessed HPDF flex funds:

From December 18, 2025, to January 20, 2026, Building Changes conducted an online survey for providers who have been trained and certified to access HPDF flex funds. Survey outreach was conducted via email. They were asked about their experience with training, accessing funds, and how the program can better support youth. One survey respondent was randomly chosen to receive a $50 e-gift card for their participation. See *Appendix C* for survey questions.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Results

Throughout the entire program, **a total of 2,713 households across 10 communities were served from August 2020 to December 2025.** Spokane County served the most clients followed by Pierce County and Clark County (see *Figure 4*). Among the years that HPDF has been active, 2024 had the most clients served with 790 which was a 72% increase in service likely due to the addition of four new counties and increased funding for HPDF. This dropped 32% in 2025 to 531 clients, making it the second highest year of total clients served (see *Figure 5*).

Importantly, the impact of HPDF extends well beyond individual YYA clients. More than 2,713 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

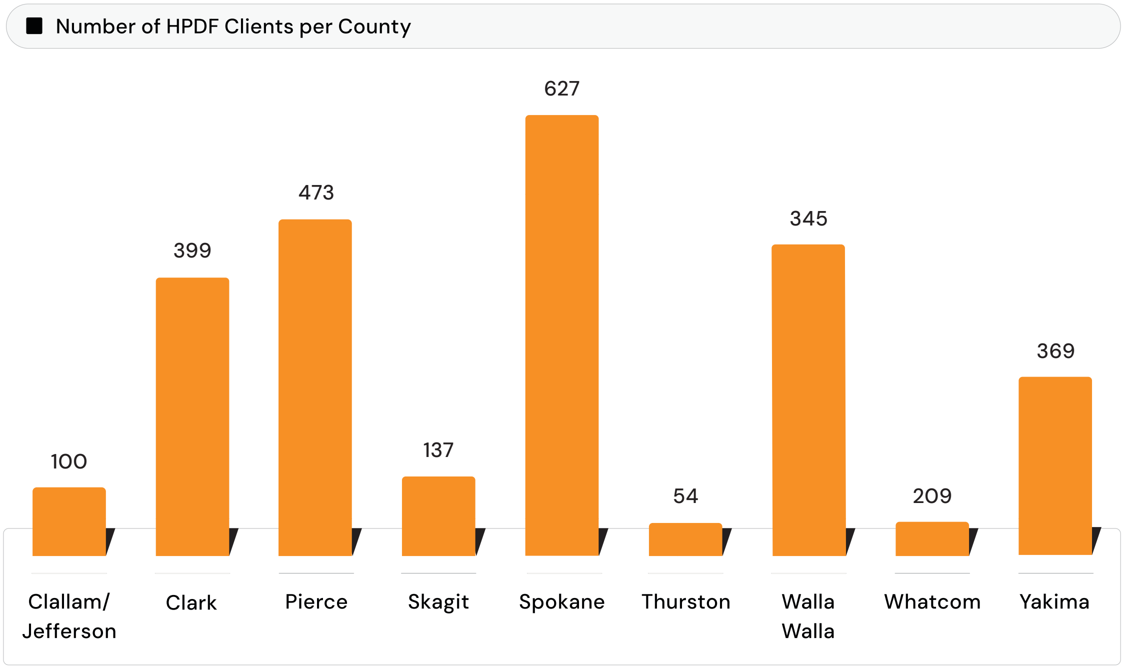
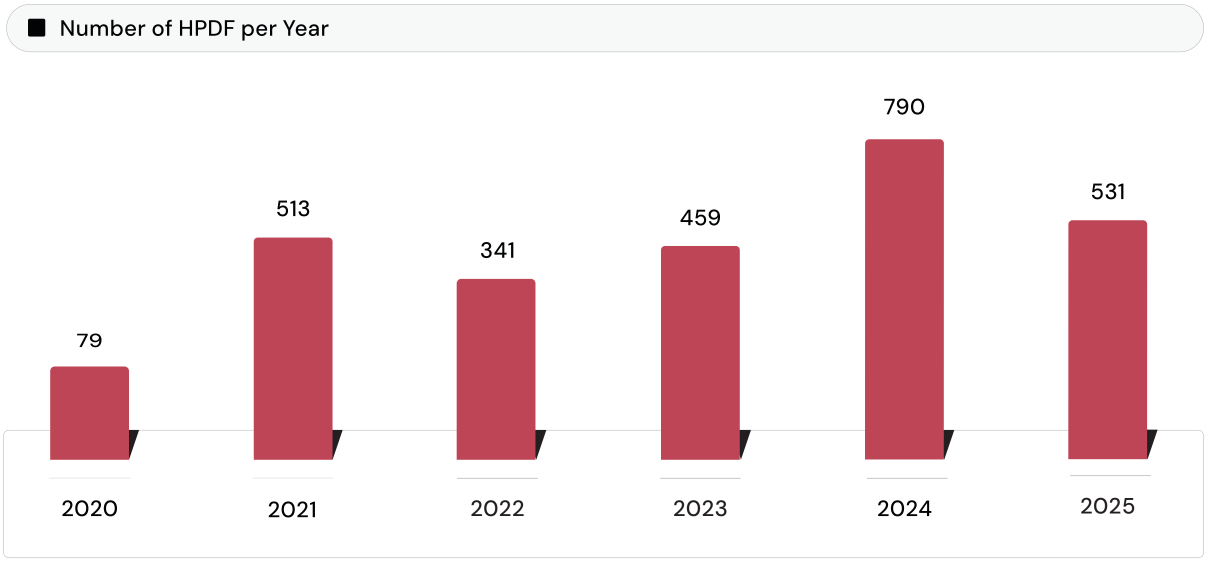


Figure 5



Demographics

Age and Race Ethnicity

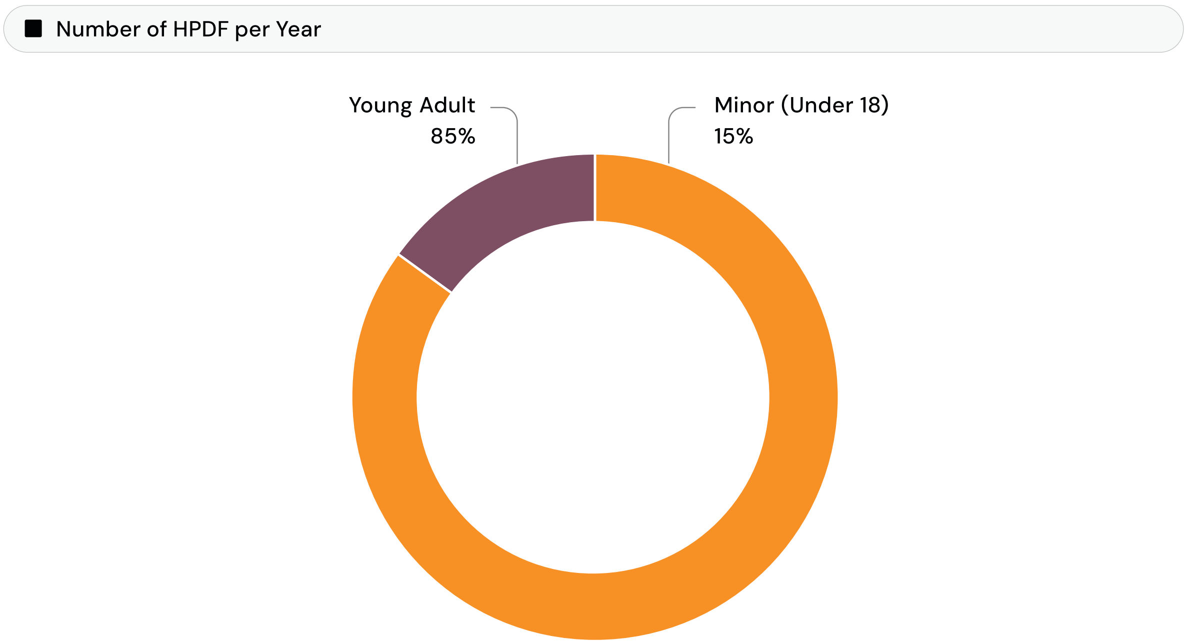
As shown in *Figure 6*, the majority of clients served by HPDF identified as young adults (18+) at 85% (*n=2,308*) while 15% (*n=405*) identified as a minor (under 18). This has shifted overtime with number of minors being served increasing to 35% (*n=186*) in 2025 from 0% in 2021 suggesting that communities are growing their reach among younger populations.

Conversations with FAs have stated that many of these minors are part of a family household rather than being an unaccompanied minor. This distinction matters as unaccompanied minors face significant barriers to stability due to fear of the homelessness and education systems, social stigma, paper and legal barriers (i.e., lack of identification documents like state IDs, birth certificates, insurance), lack of access to basic needs, and much more.[3] As part of future efforts, Building Changes plans to intentionally invest more resources in reaching and serving unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness.

3. The New York State Technical and Educational Assistance Center for Homeless Students. (2025). *Barriers and Challenges Facing Unaccompanied Youth.*

As shown in *Figure 7*, more than half of the clients served by HPDF identified as BIPOC at 53% (*n=1,426*) while 33% (*n=882*) identified as White, Non-Hispanic and 15% (*n=405*) had an unknown race. The majority of BIPOC clients identified as Hispanic/Latinx at 24% (*n=640*), followed by Black or African American at 20% (n=533), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (NHOPI) at 8% (*n=204*), American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) at 5% (n=146), and Asian at 2% (*n=44*) (See *Figure 8*).

Figure 6



The racial and ethnic distribution of HPDF clients closely aligns with statewide data collected by the **Washington State Department of Commerce's Snapshot of Homelessness Report** on youth and young adults (YYA) experiencing homelessness (See *Figure 8*).[4] Representation of Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and NHOPI HPDF clients closely mirrors the broader YYA homelessness population indicating equitable access for these groups. However, AI/AN individuals appear underrepresented in HPDF compared to the statewide population (5% vs 13%) highlighting potential disparities in outreach and access for this population. Additionally, no clients in HPDF identified (or

4. Washington State Department of Commerce. (2026). *Snapshot of Homelessness in Washington State for January 2025.*

disclosed) as Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) demonstrating very limited engagement of MENA youth and/or potential barriers to access. **Overall, the data suggests that HPDF is mostly equitable in access with more targeted outreach and engagement needed for AI/AN and MENA youth.**

Figure 7

BIPOC Status of HPDF Clients

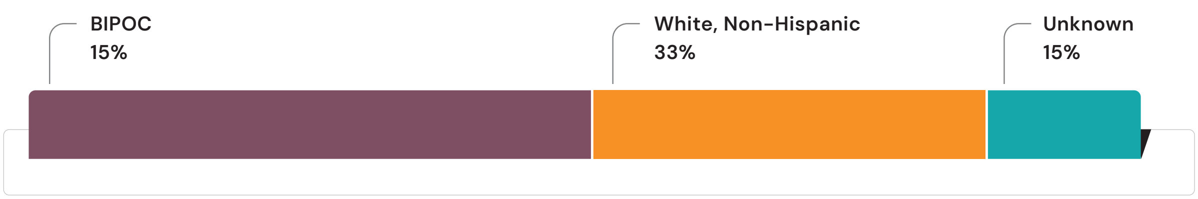
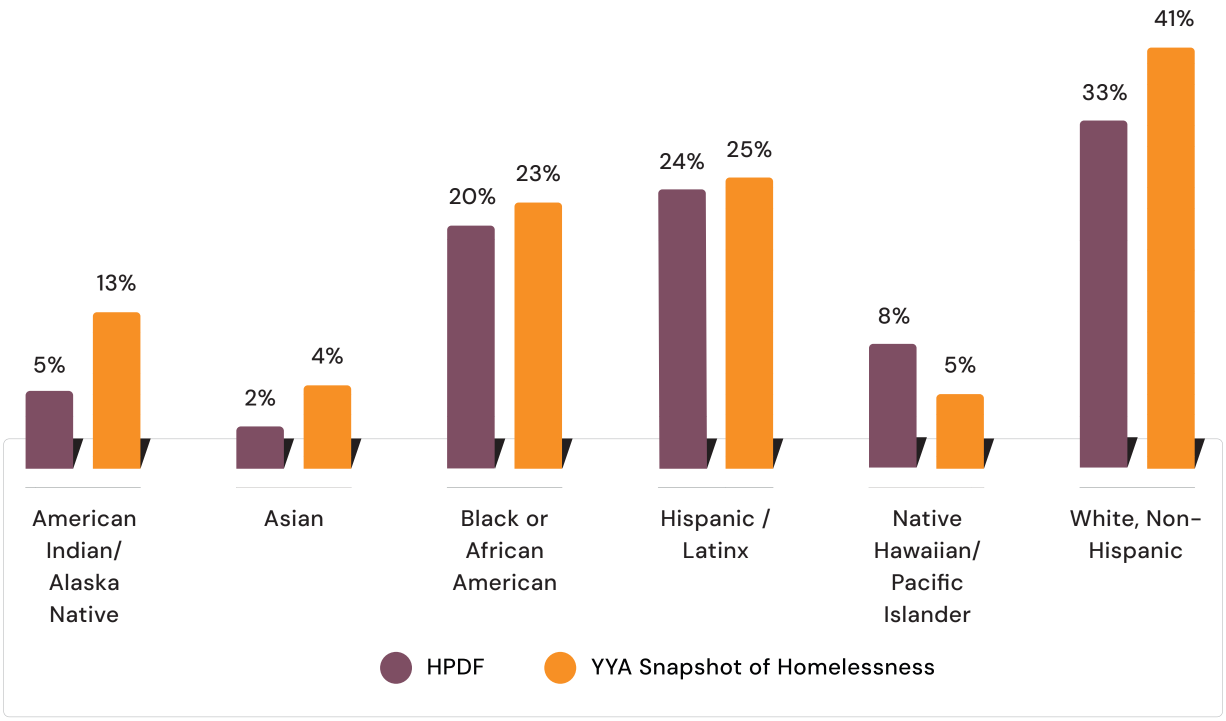


Figure 8

Distribution of Race/Ethnicity for HPDF vs Snapshot of Homelessness



Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, 18% (*n=481*) of HPDF clients identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning (LGBQ+), while 5% (*n=136*) identified as gender expansive which includes transgender, genderqueer, and non-binary individuals (See Figure 9 and 10). Among cisgender clients, 63% (*n=1,350*) identified as girls/woman and 37% (*n=780*) identified as boys/men. Data from the American Institute for Boys and Men indicate that men make up most of the population of people experiencing homelessness at 60% indicating that HPDF may potentially be underserving youth who identify as cisgender boys/men.[5]

As shown in *Figure 11*, the proportion of LGBQ+ clients was higher in 2021 and 2022 (22% and 23%) and declined in 2023, stabilizing at 15%-16% in the following years. Representation for gender expansive clients peaked in 2022 and 2023 (7% and 8%) and then declined in the following years. These trends may reflect changes in program outreach, referral patterns, or identity disclosure overtime.

Figure 9

Sexual Orientation of HPDF Clients

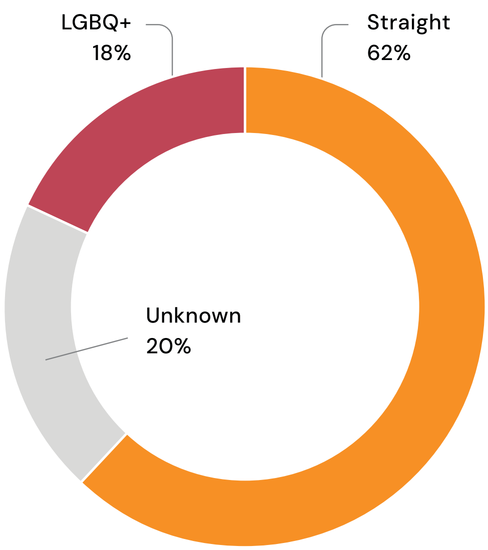
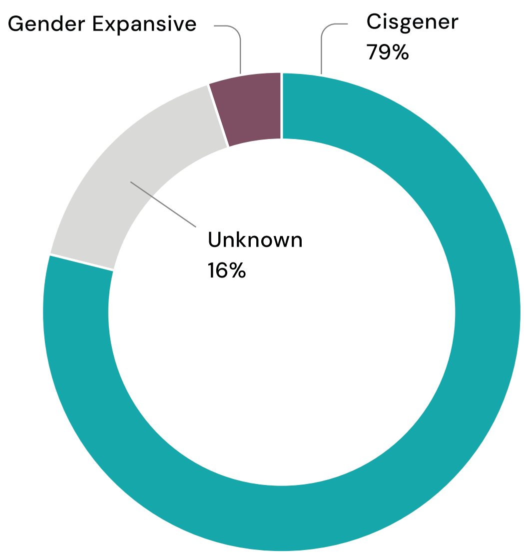


Figure 10

Gender Identity of HPDF Clients

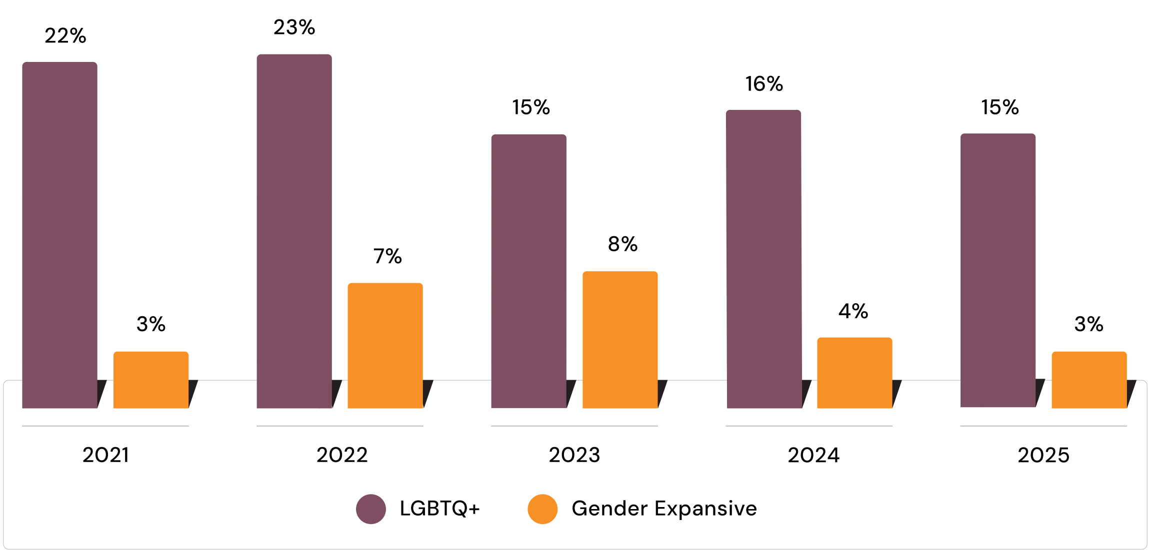


5. American Institute For Boys and Men. (2025). *Male homelessness in the United States.*

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Figure 11

LGBTQIA + HPDF Clients Over Time



Direct comparisons for sexual orientation and gender identities beyond 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.[6] This suggests that LGBTQIA+ youth are underrepresented in HPDF 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.

> ***I deeply appreciate the difference this funding has made in the lives of my clients and community. I've made requests as an adult community member...and I appreciate that that is an option. I'm very connected with trans and queer young people in my community, and everywhere, their need is great. I am forever grateful for the difference this has made to them, especially."***
>
> **– Community Provider from Skagit and *Whatcom* Counties**

6. National Network for Youth. (2023). *LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness.*

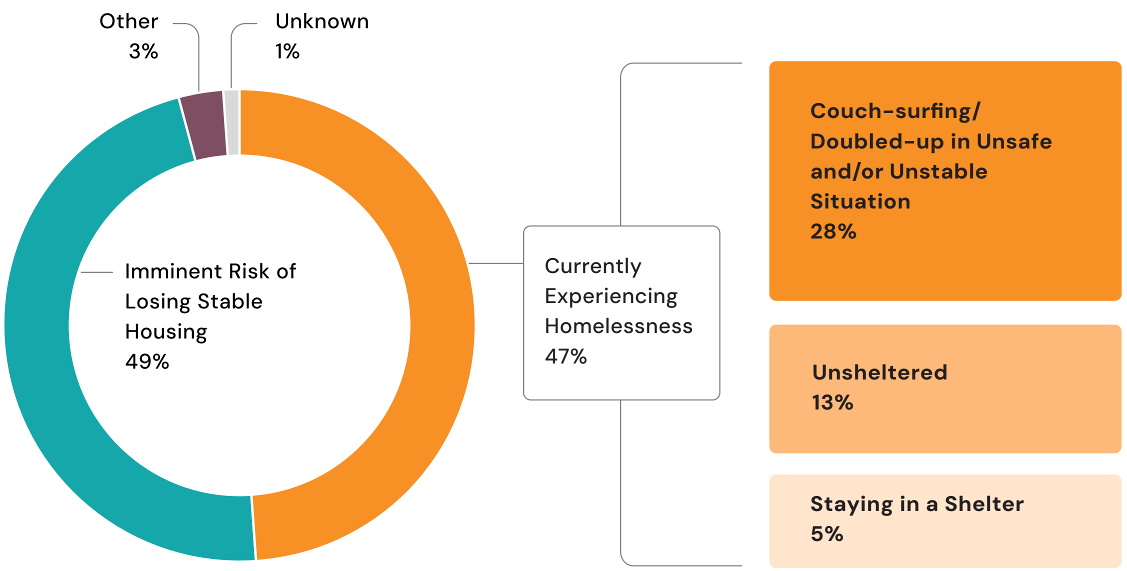
Living Situation

As shown in *Figure 12*, almost half of HPDF clients were at imminent risk losing stable housing before receiving funds at 49% (*n=1,342*), while 47% (*n=1,263*) of clients were currently experiencing homelessness. The most common living situation of clients experiencing homelessness was couch surfing/doubled up in an unsafe and/or unstable situation at 28% (*n=759*), followed by unsheltered at 13% (*n=357*), and staying in a shelter at 5% (*n=147*). The higher representation of couch surfing/ doubled up youth compared to youth who are unsheltered or staying in a shelter reflects the important gap HPDF fills in serving youth who don't meet the federal definition of homelessness.[7]

Although HPDF has served a similar share of YYA who are at risk of homelessness and currently experiencing homelessness, its function has shifted overtime to help households remained housed before homelessness occurs (see *Figure 13*). In the early years of the program (2020-2022), HPDF primarily served individuals who were already experiencing homelessness at a rate between 68% to 70%, and only about a quarter of individuals at risk of homelessness (27% to 28%). In 2023, this pattern

Figure 12

Prior Housing Status of HPDF Clients



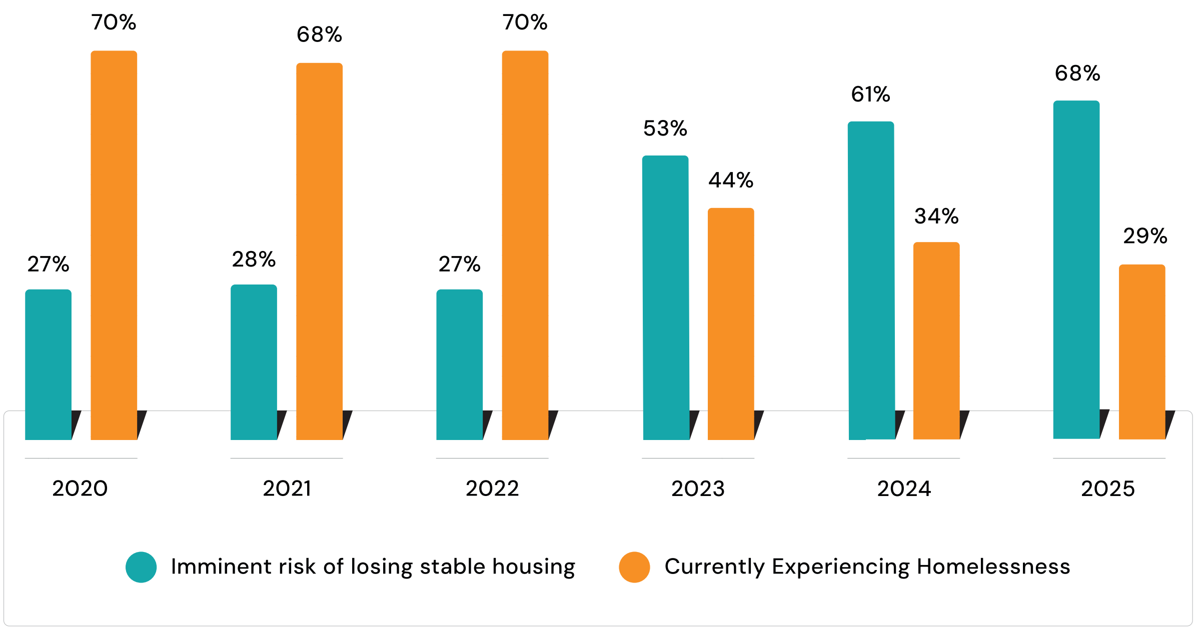
7. US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2025). *Four Categories of the Homeless Definition.*

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

flipped with the majority of clients being housed but at imminent risk of becoming homelessness, a trend that would continue and grow through 2025. This shows that HPDF is both a tool for prevention and a resource to get people out of homelessness. This pattern also shows the increased demand for short-term stabilization resources for households that are on the brink of homelessness.

Figure 13

Prior Housing Status of HPDF Clients Over Time



Pregnant/Parenting and Student Status

As shown in *Figure 13*, 26% (*n=714*) of HPDF clients reported being pregnant or parenting. At the start of the program in 2020, 37% HPDF clients reported being pregnant or parenting, which has since dropped to 20% in 2025. While HPDF counts clients at the individual level, this further suggests the program also indirectly supports additional household members (e.g., children) meaning the number of people benefitting from HPDF is greater than 2,713 clients.

Figure 14 shows that 29% (*n=776*) of HPDF clients were currently students demonstrating the overlap that HPDF has with the education. Additionally, the number of students that HPDF serves continues to increase, going from 5% in the first full year of HPDF to 49% in 2025.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Figure 14

Pregnant/Parenting Status of HPDF Clients

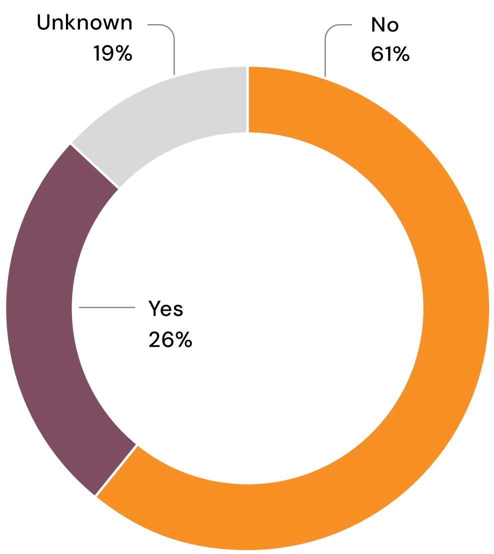
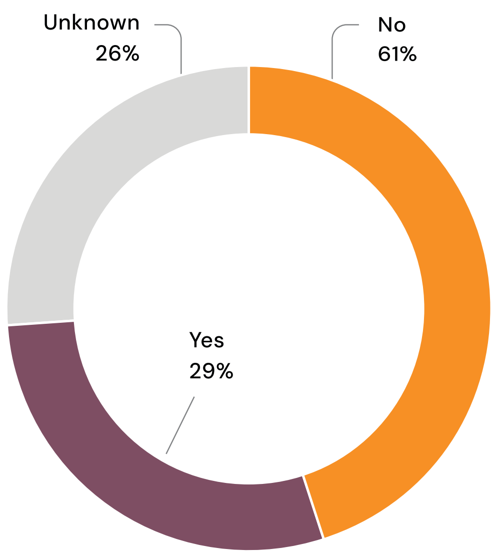


Figure 15

Student Status of HPDF Clients



Fiscal Information

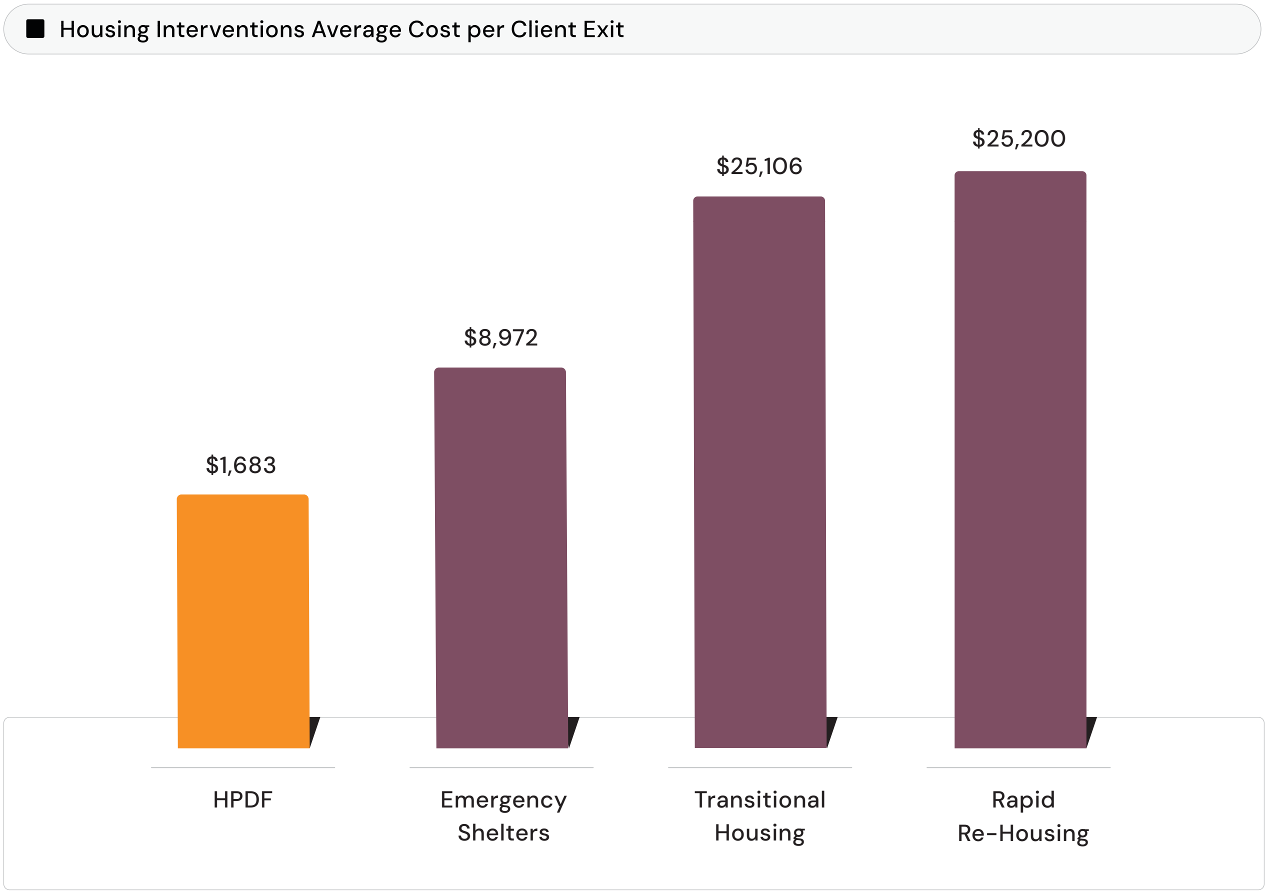
Flex Fund Spending

HPDF's Centralized Diversion Fund model continues to prove that Diversion is a more cost-effective approach to house young people compared to more traditional housing services. As shown in *Figure 16*, the average cost per client exit through HPDF was $1,683 which is significantly lower than the cost of emergency shelters at $8,972, transitional housing at $25,106, and rapid re-housing at $25,200.[8] Additionally, it took these individuals an average three days (72 hours) to receive flex funds from HPDF.

Between August 2020 and December 2025, HPDF distributed a total of $6.9 million with an overall average spending of $1,683 per client. Clark County and Pierce County had the highest total spending ($1.3 million each), which reflects the larger numbers of clients served. Spokane County served the most clients (*n=627*) but had the second lowest average spending per client ($1,200). Skagit County and Thurston County served the least amount of clients but reported the highest average spending, indicating more intensive support per individual (see *Table 1*).

8. Department of Commerce. (2025). *Washington State Homeless System Performance County Report Card.*

Figure 16



Clients who are students had the highest average flex funding compared to other client averages ($2,362) followed clients at risk of losing stable ($2,294) and gender expansive clients ($1,707) (see *Table 2*). Rental assistance/arrears made up the highest percentage of flex funding at 42%, followed by housing deposits at 37%, and eviction prevention at 18% (see *Figure 17*).

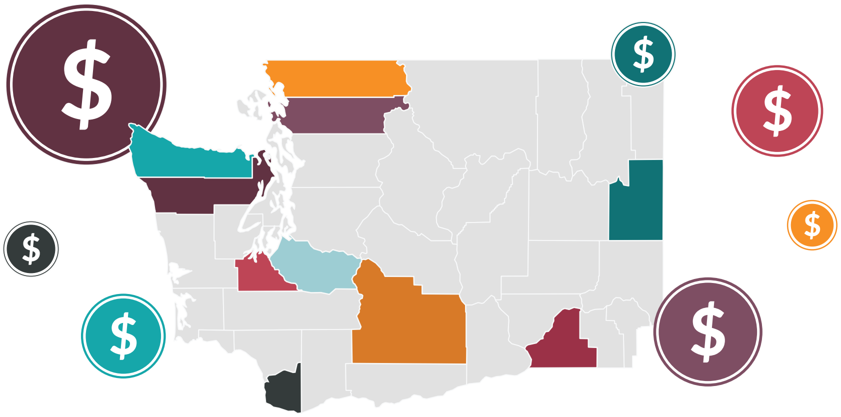
As shown in both *Figure 17* and *Table 3*, rental assistance/arrears was the most common fund request type and accounted for the highest total amount disbursed at over $2.3 million, with an average request of $1,897. Eviction prevention had the highest average amount per request ($3,093) despite being requested less compared to rental assistance/arrears and housing deposits, indicating more intensive financial need per case. Overall, the distribution of spending highlights a primary focus on housing stabilization to prevent clients from losing their current housing and who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Table 1

Total Flex Fund Spending Information

County	Total Flex Fund Spending	Average Flex Fund Spending	Number of Clients Served
Clallam/ Jefferson	$314,449	$1,883	100
Clark	$1,331,509	$2,480	399
Pierce	$1,315,346	$1,858	473
Skagit	$569,233	$3,061	137
Spokane	$1,197,822	$1,200	627
Thurston	$160,592	$2,677	54
Walla Walla	$500,634	$907	345
Whatcom	$745,688	$2,260	209
Yakima	$772,889	$1,363	369
All Counties	**$6,908,164**	**$1,683**	**2,713**



Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

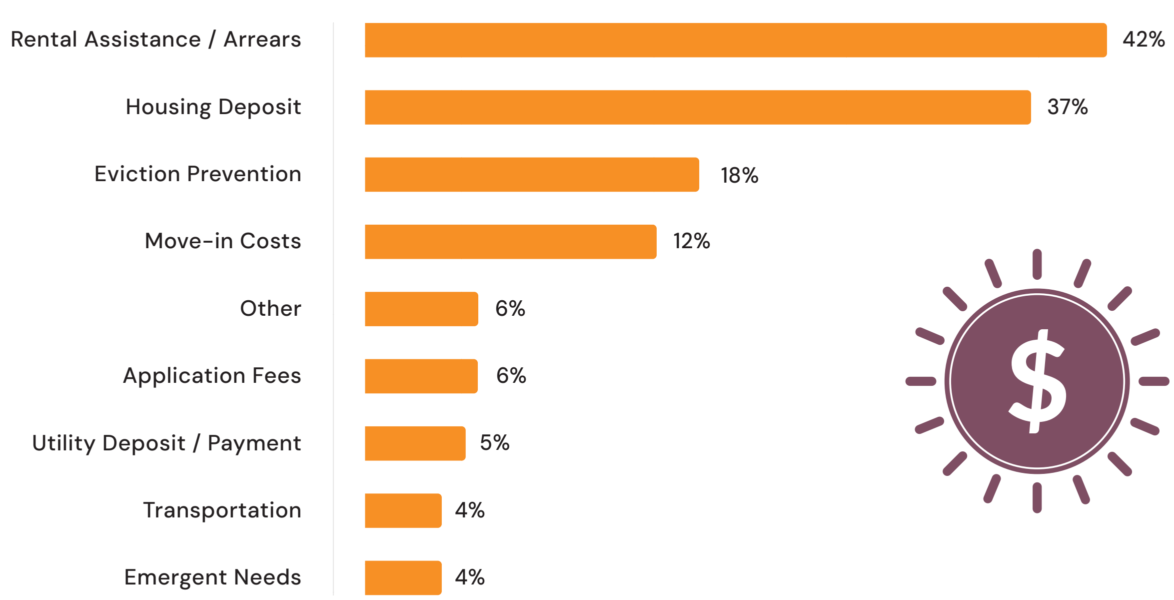
Table 2

Average Flex Fund Spending per Group

Group	Average Flex Fund Spending
Student	$2,362
At Risk of Losing Stable Housing	$2,294
Gender Expansive	$1,707
BIPOC	$1,678
LGBQ+	$1,483
Pregnant/Parenting	$1,477
White, non-Hispanic	$1,425
Homeless	$1,208

Figure 17

Flex Fund Request Types



Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Table 3

Spending Information by Top Fund Request Types

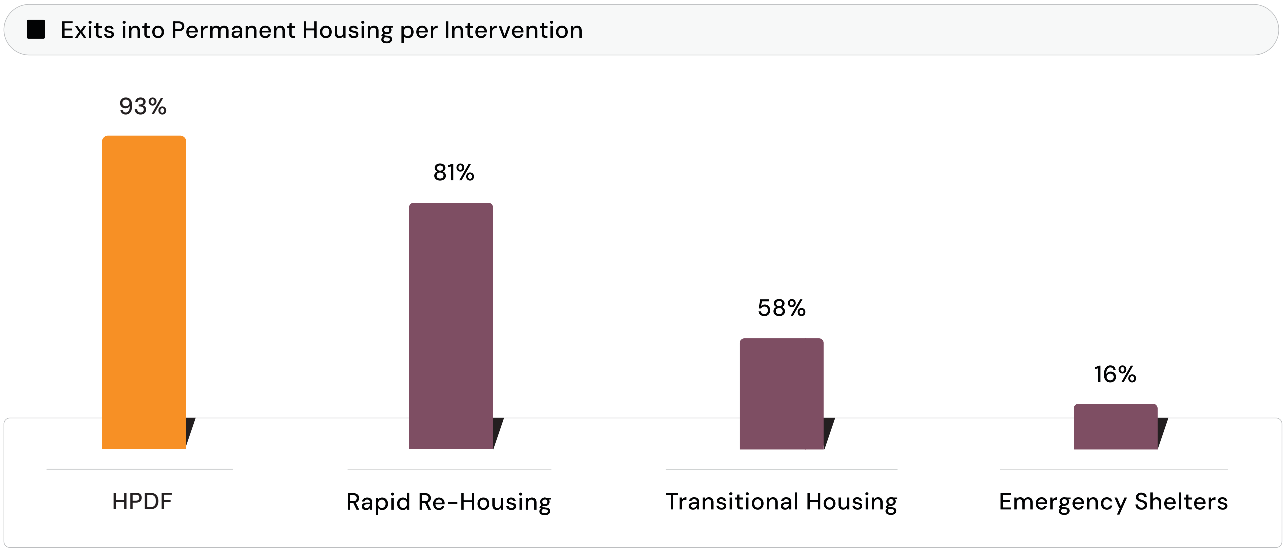
Fund Request Type	Average Amount	Total Disbursed
Rental Assistance/Arrears	$1,897	$2,324,226
Housing Deposit	$1,422	$1,513,451
Eviction Prevention	$3,093	$1,753,943
Move-In Costs	$2,192	$850,520
Other (e.g., Legal Services, ID and Document, Storage)	$697	$127,550
Application Fees	$79	$13,447
Utility Deposit	$591	$88,670
Transportation (including relocation)	$527	$71,123
Emergent Needs	$697	$94,846
Moving Expenses	$809	$70,388

Housing Stability

The overall goal of HPDF is for at least 75% of young people successfully diverted with flexible funding to remain housed three months after receiving assistance. Of the 2,713 households served by HPDF, HMIS exit data from September 2020 through December 2025 are available for 76% (*n=2,068*), excluding households served in Pierce County. Among households with exit data, 92% (*n=1,906*) exited to permanent housing, exceeding outcomes for other traditional housing services (*Figure 18*).[8] This suggests that HPDF's diversion and flexible funding approach is highly effective at helping young people rapidly resolve housing crises and achieve stable housing at exit.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Figure 18



Returns Within One Year

As shown in *Figure 19*, returns to the homelessness response system remained relatively low following HPDF. 3% (*n=71*) of households returned within three months, increasing to 6% (*n=132*) within six months, and 11% (n=237) within one year. The low rate of returns within the first three months suggests that HPDF is largely successful at helping households achieve an immediate housing solution that is sustained after assistance ends.

Return rates varied across counties, with one-year rates ranging from 5% in Clallam/Jefferson and Thurston to 17% in Walla Walla. Clark and Skagit also had higher one-year return rates (16%), while Spokane and Whatcom had lower rates (7%). Despite this variation, returns within the first three months remained relatively low across all counties, while differences became more pronounced over time.

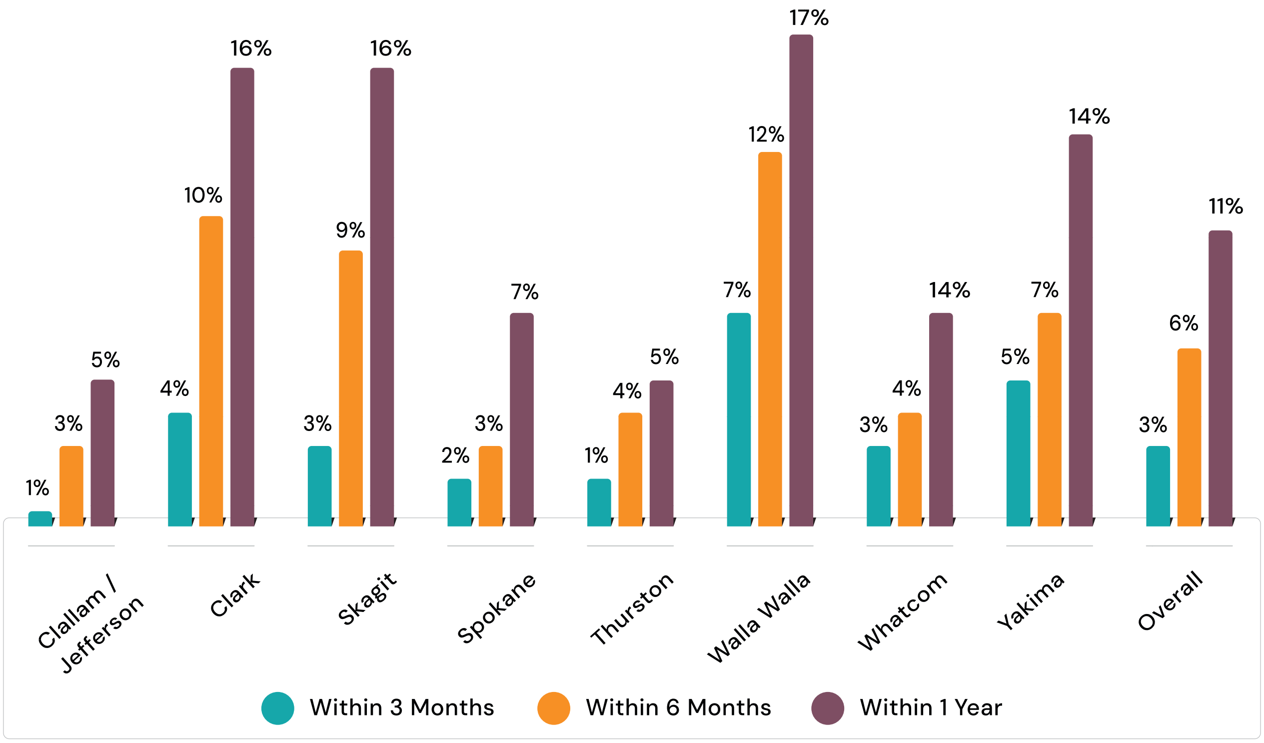
Longer-Term Returns

HPDF's length of operation also allows for examining housing stability beyond the first year. Overall, 15% (*n=311*) of households returned to homelessness within 18 months and 18% (n=379) within two years. While returns continued to increase over time, 82% of households had not returned to the homelessness response system within two years of receiving HPDF. HPDF's two-year return rate was lower than emergency shelter at 22%, but higher than rapid re-housing at 11% and transitional housing at 14%.[8]

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Figure 19

Return to Homelessness Rates by County



Overall, these findings suggest that HPDF is effective at promoting both immediate and longer-term housing stability. Most households exit HPDF to permanent housing, and returns to homelessness remain particularly low in the months immediately following assistance. While returns gradually increase over time, 82% of households had not returned to the homelessness response system within two years. This pattern suggests that HPDF is generally successful at resolving immediate housing crises and creating housing stability that lasts beyond the initial intervention, while also indicating that a subset of households may benefit from additional or ongoing support to sustain housing over time.

Client Experiences

Between October 2025 to January 2026, Building Changes conducted three virtual 1-hour interviews with youth who have received HPDF funds. The stories below share their stories while maintaining the anonymity of their identity.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

(1) One HPDF client shared that they learned about HPDF from a provider with which they were working with. This provider was already helping the client with their transition into college and providing the client and their spouse with gas cards to get between school, work, and home. The client and their spouse were going through a lot of stress because of them being financially unstable and needing to find their own place to live. They were able to find a place to live at their grandpa's property and the provider was able to connect them with HPDF to receive funds to pay for two months of rent. **They stated that the process was very easy and that they felt very respected and listened to during the Diversion conversation. Receiving the funds allowed them to (1) not to have to stress about paying for basic needs, (2) see their family more, and (3) for the first time felt financially free.** Today the client and their spouse are looking to buy a home as well as looking for full-time employment.

(2) Before receiving HPDF funds, a client who just had a baby was living with friends in an unsafe living situation. They were receiving support from SNAP and TANF but had no additional funds to move out of their current situation because all their money was going towards their current rent and diapers. They ended up showing up to a community organization to receive support and explained their situation, which led to the provider mentioning HPDF. **The client mentioned they felt very supported during the Diversion conversation and were able to use the funds to pay for a deposit for an apartment and move-in costs. This allowed the client to be able to afford to fully furnish the apartment and save money for future rent.** The client stated that they're currently living their best life continuing to have their own place and able to get ahead of bills and save money.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

(3) The last HPDF client, prior to receiving support, lived with their sister and paid half of the rent. They described the living situation as being unsafe and uncomfortable which led to them having to move out of the home immediately due to conflict that escalated into intervention from law enforcement. The client reached out to a provider across the county to receive support but was told that all the available services had long waitlists. They ended up connecting with the FA in the county who gave them a list of housing resources, one of which being HPDF. The client described feeling very respected during the Diversion conversation and appreciated that it focused on what help was needed rather than what was wrong/what happened. **HPDF funds were used for a deposit for a one-bedroom apartment with the client was able to quickly move into. They lived at the apartment for a year and were able to save up their money to buy house, which they now live in.** They mentioned that after receiving the HPDF funds, it was very difficult to afford groceries and that the food banks in their area weren't accessible. They ended the conversation mentioning how grateful and appreciative they are for HPDF.

These three stories each demonstrate how HPDF flex funds can help YYA in the most critical times. HPDF is a direct pathway to stability for many youth, and can serve as a launch pad for increased stability and continued success.

Fiscal Administrator Focus Groups

To better understand how HPDF was functioning at the local level, focus groups were conducted with the FAs across participating counties. On January 6 and 7, 2025, Building Changes conducted two 1.5-hour virtual focus groups with all 10 FAs. They were asked about their experiences and perspectives on their role as an FA, strengths and weaknesses of HPDF, and areas where it can be improved. These findings offer important context for understanding how HPDF operates in practice and where adjustments may be needed to strengthen its impact moving forward.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

HPDF is a Key Resource in the Community

FAs consistently emphasized that HPDF is one of the most effective and valued resources available within their local homelessness response systems. Its flexibility and rapid disbursement of funds allow providers to respond to urgent housing crises in ways that other funding sources cannot.

- FAs highlighted that HPDF allows for tailored, youth-centered solutions supporting a wide range of needs such as rental arrears, utility payments, transportation, and other one-time costs. This flexibility is especially important in situations where traditional programs have strict eligibility requirements or longer processing timelines.
- Several FAs noted that HPDF is one of few resources that are capable of intervening quickly enough to prevent homelessness or resolve a housing crisis. The ability to distribute funds within 72 hours was described as critical to successful outcomes, especially in fast-moving situations.
- FAs also pointed to the program's role in strengthening local systems. HPDF supports coordination between providers, encourages creative problem-solving through Diversion conversations, and provides a practical tool for addressing immediate barriers to housing stability.

Persistent Administrative and Economic Barriers

FAs stated that both administrative requirements and structural economic challenges are persistent barriers to HPDF's implementation and effectiveness. These barriers make it difficult for young people to secure, access, and maintain housing and stability.

- FAs consistently cited rent increases, medical expenses, and employment disruptions as key factors limiting YYA's ability to maintain housing. As a result, HPDF funds are increasingly only focused on rental assistance/arrears, limiting the program's ability to address a broader range of stabilization needs.
- Many FAs stated that administrative and documentation requirements create barriers to access and delays for clients. They reported ongoing challenges with incomplete applications, difficulty obtaining required documentation (e.g., W-9s, leases), and reliance on an insufficient submission process. These barriers slow fund disbursement and reduce the program's responsiveness to time-sensitive housing crises.
- Finally, FAs mentioned structural and economic constraints within the system limit the effectiveness of HPDF citing a shortage of affordable housing, restrictive landlord screening criteria (e.g., credit, rental history, income thresholds), and limited availability of alternative housing resources. These systemic barriers make it difficult for YYA to secure and sustain housing, even when HPDF support is available.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Increasing Demand for Eviction Prevention Support

Across counties, FAs consistently described HPDF funds being dominated by eviction prevention. While these requests often prevent immediate displacement, FAs expressed concern that the frequency of eviction-related assistance is limiting HPDF's ability to function as a Diversion and unaccompanied minor homelessness prevention tool.

- FAs highlighted broader economic challenges leading to increased eviction prevention request including rent increases outpacing wages, strict landlord screening practices, and reluctance to rent to households with eviction histories. In multiple communities HPDF was described as the most accessible (or only) eviction resource available.
- Several FAs noted that eviction prevention requests were most requested by families with children, often following job loss, medical crises, or other sudden financial hardships.
- The Thurston County FA shared that eviction prevention quickly depleted available funds, prompting the county to secure additional local dollars to meet demand. The Pierce County FA also reported that large eviction-prevention requests can rapidly deplete funding. The Clark County FA noted that, prior to restructuring their funding approach, eviction prevention requests were depleting resources intended for Diversion-focused support.

Opportunities and Limitations of HPDF Implementation

HPDF presents clear opportunities and limitations in its approach. While the program is expanding its reach to diverse communities, its effectiveness is constrained by outside barriers and an overreliance on HPDF as a standalone solution.

- FAs reported increased use of HPDF among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households, Tribal communities, Spanish-speaking families, and individuals impacted by recent environmental and political disruptions, including flooding and immigration-related challenges.
- Several FAs emphasized that financial assistance alone is not sufficient to resolve housing instability when underlying barriers such as insufficient income, landlord housing requirements, or existing debt remain unaddressed.
- FAs expressed concerns that some requests lack a clear or sustainable housing stability plan and rely too heavily on HPDF as only a one-time financial solution. FAs reported instances where HPDF was being used in situations where it was not the most appropriate intervention.

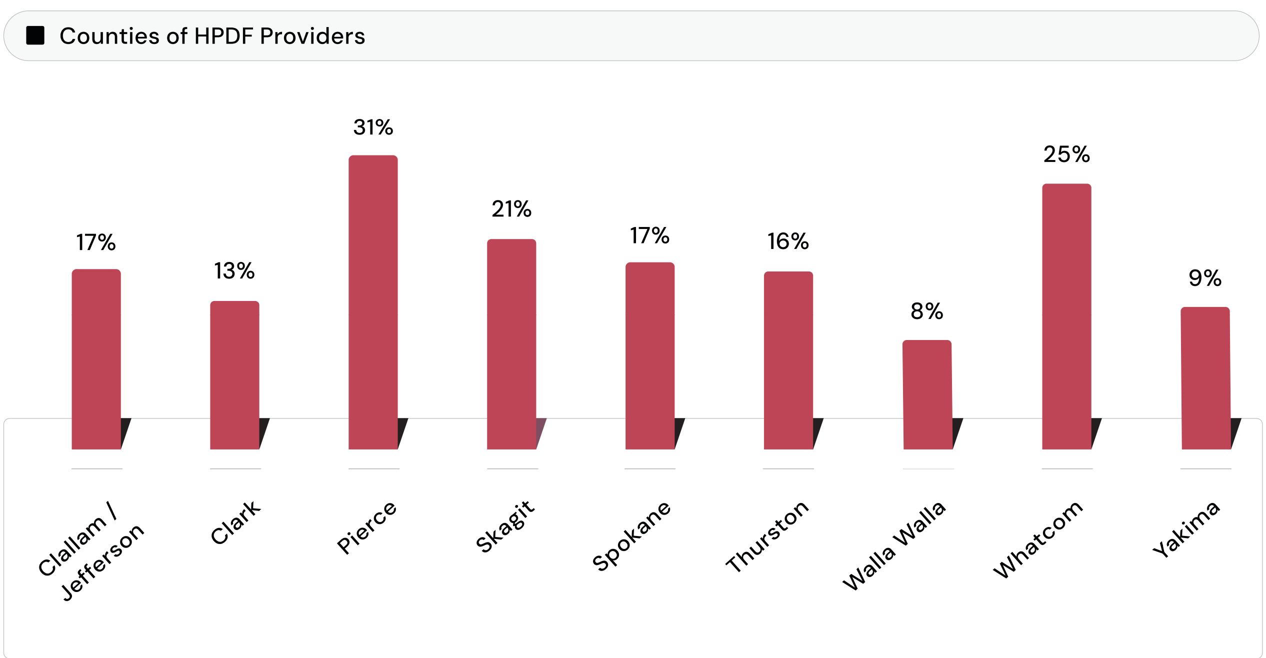
Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Provider Survey Results

From December 18, 2025, to January 20, 2026, Building Changes conducted an online survey for providers who have been trained and certified to access HPDF flex funds. A total of 597 individuals from over 160 organizations have been certified to request HPDF flex funds with 62% (n=370) of them having a submitted request be approved. Survey outreach was conducted via email with a total of 95 requesters responding to the survey. Most providers served youth in Pierce County at 31% (*n=29*), followed by Whatcom County at 25% (*n=24*), and Skagit County at 21% (*n=20*) (see *Figure 20*).

Most participants worked in organizations that were homeless or housing-focused at 86% (*n=82*), followed by education/McKinney Vento focused organizations at 34% (n=32), and foster care or child welfare focused organizations at 24% (*n=23*) (See *Figure 21*). The main populations that requesters focused on were youth experiencing homelessness at 67% (*n=64*), students at 52% (*n=49*), and BIPOC at 41% (n=*39*) (See *Figure 22*).

Figure 20



Access and Navigation

When asked to rate their overall experience accessing HPDF funds, most providers said it was excellent at 42% (*n=40*), followed by good at 36% (*n=34*), neutral at 15% (n=*14*), needs improvement at 3% (*n=3*), and poor at 3% (*n=3*). When asked about the process of navigating the HPDF process, most providers said it was very easy or somewhat easy at 75% (*n=71*), followed by very difficult or somewhat difficult at 13% (*n=12*), and neutral at 13% (*n=12*). The most common barriers that prevented providers and clients from accessing funds were eligibility requirements, documentation requirements, and lack of time and capacity.

When asked what made the process feel easy, providers consistently described it as straightforward, easy to navigate, and quick to complete. Many emphasized the responsiveness and support of FAs, as well as the helpful training and guidance provided by Building Changes, stating that having accessible points of contact made the process smoother. Additionally, providers highlighted that the overall design of HPDF contributes to its ease specifically mentioning its low-barrier approach, minimal paperwork requirements, and flexibility to support creative, youth-led housing solutions. These elements create a process that is both efficient and accessible, especially when compared to more restrictive housing and homelessness programs.

Figure 21

Organization Types of HPDF Providers

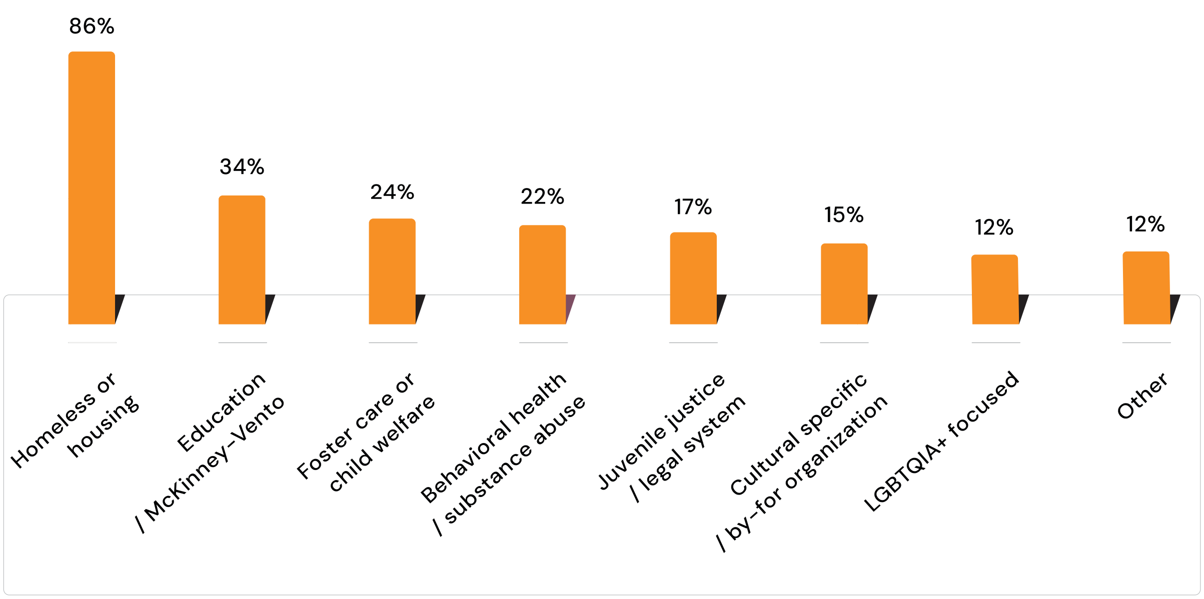
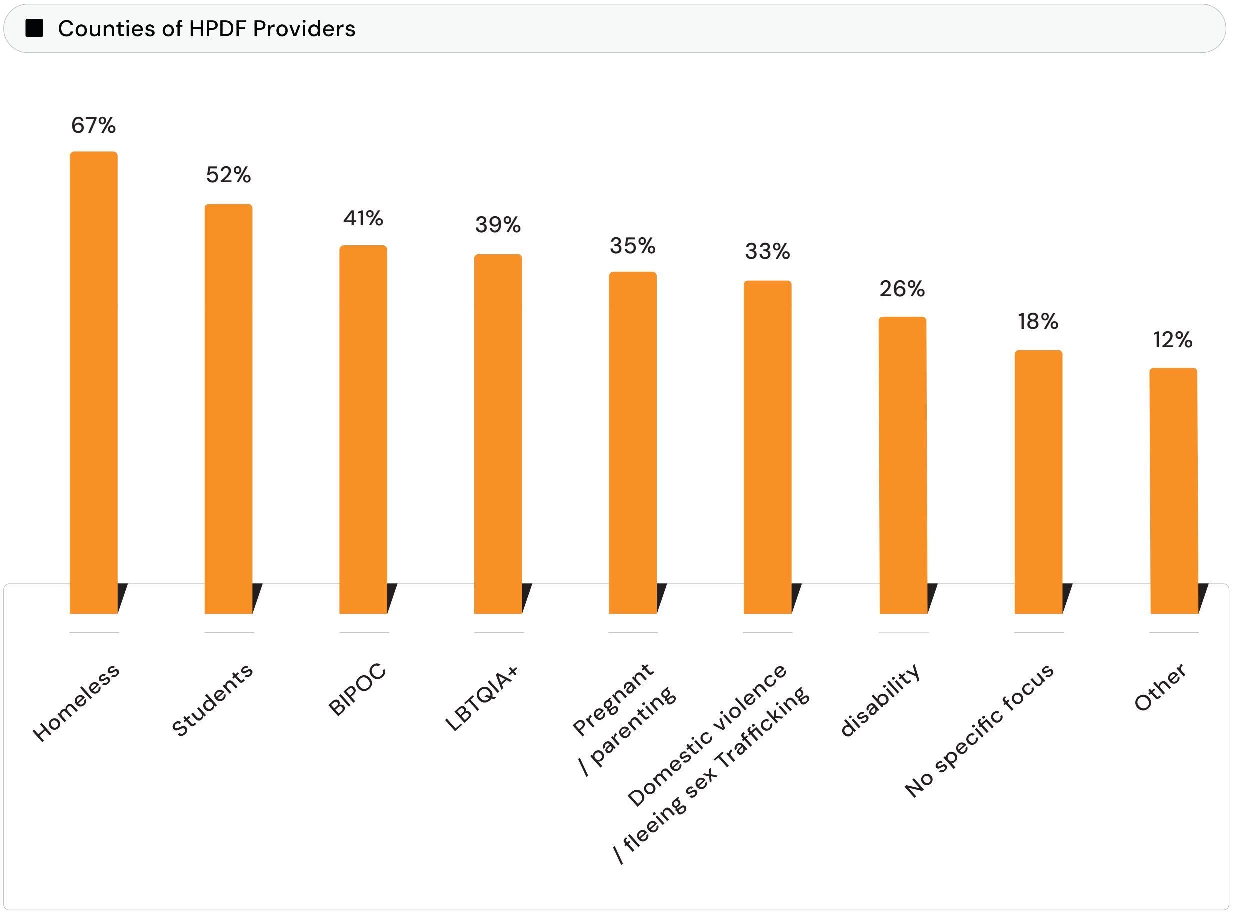


Figure 22



When asked what made the process difficult, providers mentioned unclear guidance around documentation requirements and what materials are needed for different types of requests. Many also described challenges in understanding what housing solutions are eligible, particularly when flexibility in the model leads to ambiguity in decision-making or inconsistent feedback from FAs. Additionally, providers stated that there is difficulty navigating the availability of funds in their county or when additional funds will be released. They also expressed a need for more guidance on submitting applications, writing strong narratives for housing solutions, and completing enrollments in HMIS. While the program is designed to be low-barrier and flexible, these challenges suggest a need for clearer, more consistent guidance and improved communication to support providers in effectively accessing HPDF.

Additional Supports Needed

When asked what additional support are needed to better assist youth in accessing HPDF, many providers emphasized the need for HPDF to expand in the following areas: (1) funding in current counties; (2) geographic accessibility in rural counties where HPDF is not available; and (3) flexibility in allowable uses of fund (e.g., basic needs, gas, minor fines). Providers also highlighted that many youth are unaware that HPDF exists ,highlighting the need for increased outreach and marketing to create more awareness among cross-system partners (e.g., schools and the coordinated-entry system) and specific populations (e.g., Tribal and LGBTQIA+ youth).

Providers mentioned wanting clearer tools and guidance like step-by-step instructions, documents outlining required documentation, examples of strong housing narratives, and improvements to the application platform. They also mentioned wanting more opportunities for training, peer learning, and capacity building support. Clearer tools and guidance like step-by-step instructions, documents outlining required documents, examples of strong housing narratives, and an improved application platform were also mentioned. These recommendations showcase the need for expanded access, clearer guidance, and stronger cross-systems integration to ensure that providers can effectively utilize HPDF to serve youth.

Needs Going Unmet

When asked what client needs remain unmet even with HPDF support, providers consistently mentioned broader structural and economic barriers that extend beyond the scope of one-time financial assistance. The most common unmet needs included access to affordable housing; limited housing availability; and increased cost of basic needs basic needs such as food, transportation, and healthcare. While HPDF can address immediate housing barriers, providers mentioned that it does not resolve long-term financial insecurity like ongoing debt, poverty, income instability, and barrier related to credit history. Additionally, providers noted the need for independent living skills, storage support, and wraparound resources to help youth maintain housing after placement. Overall, these findings suggest that while HPDF is effective in addressing immediate housing crises, significant unmet needs remain in areas requiring sustained financial support, broader housing system capacity, and more comprehensive services.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Success Stories

These stories shared by providers who took the survey demonstrate how Diversion and flexible funding can successfully bridge the gap between crisis and stability. In several cases, HPDF funds were used quickly to address specific barriers like move-in costs, rental arrears, or education-related housing needs, preventing homelessness and allowing clients to remain housed or transition to the next stage of stability. **These are only few examples of the success stories that providers mentioned in the survey:**

HPDF assisted a young adult who was exiting treatment and at high risk of homelessness due to unpaid move-in costs. Through HPDF assistance, the client was able to cover move-in fees and secure stable housing within a short timeframe. Having a safe place to live allowed the client to focus on recovery, maintain employment, and stay engaged with wraparound and community support services. Within months, the client was consistently paying rent on their own, remained sober, and avoided re-entry into crisis systems such as emergency shelters or inpatient care. **HPDF support played a critical role in breaking the cycle of instability and creating a foundation for long-term self-sufficiency.**

A client had a court ordered eviction date scheduled for the weekend unless their total rental arrears could be paid by that Friday. Two days before the client was going to be evicted, the provider submitted an HPDF request and immediately called the FA in the county to explain the situation. **The FA quickly approved the request and issued a check so that the provider could come pick it up and deliver it to the landlord directly.** The client was extremely grateful for HPDF because it allowed them to remain housed.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

An unaccompanied youth was housed in a hotel while they were in high school. After they graduated high school, they called the provider to see if they could get help securing college housing. However, to live in the dorms they would need to be taking classes which they were unable to pay the costs. Additionally, the client did not file for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and had no financial aid to pay for tuition or housing. **The client was able to transition into college because HPDF paid for the summer tuition and housing at the college dorms for fall quarter.**

I am incredibly grateful to have HPDF available in our community. Knowing we have this is reassuring and feels supportive to continue the great work of... supporting youth and families to reach their full potential in their health, education, and housing."

– Community Provider from Thurston County

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Key Takeaways

Strengths

Immediate Housing Stability

HPDF demonstrates strong effectiveness in helping youth and young adults quickly secure stable housing. Among households with available exit data in HMIS, 92% exited into permanent housing outperforming traditional housing interventions. Returns to homelessness remained low at 11% within a year of being served by HPDF, increasing gradually over time but with 82% of clients still housed within two years of receiving funds. These findings indicate that HPDF is successful at helping clients achieve rapid stabilization and preventing immediate entry into the homelessness response system. Interviews with clients reinforced these findings, with all of them stating HPDF was essential in their ability to remain housed and plan for the future.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Cost-Effectiveness

HPDF provides a highly cost-effective alternative to traditional housing interventions while producing similar, if not better results. With an average cost of $1,683 per household, it is significantly less expensive than emergency shelters, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing. This provides evidence that Diversion-based strategies and flexible funding provide a greater economic return on investment with a sustainable impact. This also allows communities to serve more youth with limited resources while still achieving strong housing outcomes.

Overall Centralized Diversion Fund Model

A key strength of HPDF is its ability to deliver funding quickly with minimal barriers to access while strengthening cross-system coordination. Funds are typically disbursed within 72 hours allowing providers to respond to immediate housing crises with flexible support tailored to the youth's needs. Additionally, the Centralized Diversion Fund model expands access to housing support for providers outside of the homelessness response system, reducing reliance of referrals and increasing cross-system coordination. The combination of speed, flexibility, and accessibility makes HPDF a key resource across communities.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Gaps

Broader Economic Needs

While HPDF is effective at resolving immediate housing crises, it does not address broader economic needs and underlying structural barriers contributing to housing instability. Providers identified ongoing challenges such as poverty, income instability, debt, and lack of affordable housing as persistent barriers for youth and young adults. Without additional and long-term, one-time financial assistance is not enough to sustain housing stability. Households may require ongoing, wraparound services to maintain long-term stability.

Overreliance on Eviction Prevention

Flexible funds in HPDF are increasingly being used for eviction prevention across counties likely due to a lack of alternative resources. Eviction prevention requests have the highest average flex funding cost at $3,093 and often deplete available community funding. While this is important to prevent displacement for many households, it limits the program's ability to function as a broader resource for Diversion. FAs stated that this reduces access for unaccompanied youth (often being used by families) and reflects broader housing barriers like rising rent prices, low wages, and strict landlord requirements.

Underrepresentation

Despite strong overall reach, populations disproportionately impacted by homelessness appear to be underrepresented in HPDF. American Indian/Alaska Native and LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults are served at lower rates in HPDF compared to their representation in the broader homeless population. Additionally, MENA youth were absent from clients served by HPDF. Whether this is due to a lack of access/outreach or limited disclosure from these groups, addressing and monitoring these disparities is critical to ensuring HPDF is equitably addressing homelessness.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Conclusion

HPDF continues to demonstrate that a Centralized Diversion Model paired with flexible financial assistance is an effective and cost-efficient strategy for preventing and reducing youth homelessness in Washington State. The program's ability to quickly stabilize youth and young adults, strengthen cross-system partnerships, and provide low-barrier support has made it a critical resource across communities. To sustain and expand this impact, continued and increased investment in HPDF will be essential. Findings from this evaluation also show that housing instability is deeply connected to broader economic challenges including poverty, rising housing costs, debt, and limited affordable housing. As a result, HPDF will be most effective when paired with broader economic stability initiatives and wraparound supportive services to help youth achieve long-term housing stability.

Recommendations

Sustain and Increase Funding to Expand HPDF Statewide

HPDF has proven to be effective at both preventing homelessness and removing barriers to housing for YYA across ten communities in the state. **Sustaining and increasing legislative funding would allow HPDF to continue its impact in the current counties it operates in, while allowing more counties to implement this model locally or regionally.** This will ensure that all youth and young adults can benefit from this approach while also providing more capacity and administrative support for FA organizations. Additionally, local funding sources at the county and city levels should be explored to sustain and strengthen HPDF in individual communities. Building local investment and buy-in will create more stability for youth, reduce reliance on state funding, and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility across governmental systems to prevent youth homelessness.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Advocate for Policies and Programs that Support Economic Stability

Though HPDF is effective at addressing immediate housing crises, structural economic barriers, such as the lack of affordable housing, limit the ability for YYA to sustain housing stability. Implementing policies and programs such as guaranteed basic income (GBI), progressive tax revenue, regional/statewide eviction-prevention funding, and the creation of a statewide Youth-By-Names-Lists (YBNL) are examples of how the government can reduce homelessness and housing instability at a long-term, systemic level. **Initiatives that promote economic thriving complemented with Diversion services could strengthen and create a more sustainable homelessness response system.**

Pair the Centralized Diversion Model with Wraparound Supportive Services

To strengthen long-term housing stability outcomes, HPDF should be paired with wraparound, youth-directed supportive services that extend beyond one-time financial assistance. While Diversion and flex funds are effective at resolving immediate housing crises, pairing them with optional supports (e.g., case management, housing navigation, financial empowerment, relationship mediation) can help address underlying barriers to stability. This approach can be modeled after programs like the Targeted Housing Assistance Program (THAP), which provides a flexible package of opt-in services tailored to each young person's housing plan over a three-to-six-month period. Services should remain voluntary and driven by youth needs and preferences to ensure support aligns with each YYA's unique situation.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Next Steps

As Building Changes continues to administer and oversee HPDF, these are areas that can or are currently being addressed to increase the impact, awareness, and fidelity of the program. These include:

Increasing Investment and Expansion

Building on the success of HPDF statewide, the program is expanding into Seattle through a new public-private partnership championed by Seattle City Council member Dionne Foster. The expansion brings together the Seattle Human Services Department (HSD), United Way of King County, Building Changes, and the Washington Acceleration Fund to bring HPDF's diversion and flexible funding approach to young people experiencing housing instability in Seattle. The partnership will expand access to homelessness prevention resources while contributing to broader efforts to achieve Functional Zero for youth and young adult homelessness in King County.

Improving Data Collection Practices

Building Changes should develop a plan for more longitudinal data collection for client outcomes outside of HMIS. This will also allow for more success stories and case studies of clients to be shared with the broader community. Additionally, Building Changes will work Continuum of Care (CoCs) HMIS teams to improve HMIS data collection and processing.

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Refining the HPDF Process

In January 2026, Building Changes updated the data collection and infrastructure platform from JotForm to Forward to simplify data entry, data reconciliation, and the overall process. This effort has had smooth implementation with the new platform receiving positive feedback from FAs and requesters. Building Changes will continue to investigate ways to simplify documentation requirements for clients and provide more guidance around submitting requests for providers.

Expanding Local Outreach and Awareness

Building Changes (alongside OHY and FAs) should partner and build local advocacy and outreach materials to increase awareness of HPDF among community organizations, funders, elected officials, and the general public. Highlighting success stories, sharing data insights through dashboards, and creating shareable materials will help grow broader community understanding of Diversion as an effective prevention and barrier removal strategy to homelessness. This work can also attract local investment and buy-in which will strengthen long-term sustainability beyond state-level funding.

Appendix A

Individual Interview Questions with HPDF Clients

1. Before receiving HPDF flex funds, what was your housing situation like? What challenges were you facing, and what supports (if any) were you trying to access before HPDF?
2. How did you hear about HPDF and 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? > 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 that HPDF couldn't cover?
7. 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. What are the biggest needs among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in your community? Have those needs shifted over time? How do you know?

2. What's driving increased eviction-prevention requests in your community? (e.g., rent increases, utilities, job insecurity)?

3. How has HPDF implementation changed over time in your community? What new systems, partners, or workflows have helped—and what gaps or process barriers remain?

4. How are partnerships with providers and systems-change partners working? Where are they strong, where are the disconnects, and what would strengthen collaboration?

5. What's working well in your HPDF Diversion/prevention efforts that could be scaled to other communities?

6. How well is HPDF serving underserved groups (e.g., BIPOC, trans/queer youth)? What outreach strategies work, what barriers exist, and are you seeing shifts in who you're serving?

7. What are 1–2 key accomplishments or success stories from the last 12 months? What made them possible?

8. What's needed to reach Functional Zero (FZ) for youth in your community? How is your organization connected to the initiative, and what feedback loops exist with HPDF? In what ways does HPDF support or fall short of local F0 goals?

9. What technical assistance, training, development, or support would most improve your work and experience as an FA?

10. Have you facilitated local HPDF certification trainings and/or learning circles? If yes, what has been beneficial/challenging about that process? If not, what barriers have kept that process from developing?

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org

Appendix C

HPDF 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 HPDF funds?
8. How easy or difficult is it for you to navigate the HPDF 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 HPDF funds (select all that apply)?
12. Do you have any specific success stories about a client or clients who have benefited from
13. HPDF? 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 HPDF support?
15. How effective was the HPDF certification training in preparing you to submit requests and navigate the HPDF process?
16. What would improve the training or make it more useful?
17. What additional support would help better assist youth in accessing HPDF?
18. Is there anything you haven't had a chance to share with us that you would like to share now?

Contact: Devin Noel-Endres at Devin.noel-endres@buildingchanges.org