

Homeless Student Stability Program: Interim Evaluation Report

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Introduction

Washington State’s Homeless Student Stability Program (HSSP)¹ provides grant funding to bring housing and education systems together to link students experiencing homelessness and their families to stable housing and community resources. The goals of the program are to provide educational stability by promoting housing stability within the student’s school district and to encourage the development of sustainable, collaborative strategies between housing and education partners.

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) contracted with Building Changes (BC) to provide technical assistance and evaluate five HSSP grant projects for fiscal years 2020-21. This interim evaluation covers the first four months of program implementation (January 1, 2020 – April 30, 2020).

Through April 30, 2020, HSSP grantees served an unduplicated total of 87 households comprised of 274 individual clients. Most households continued to receive services as of April 30. Of the 18 households who exited the program during this time, 78% (14) exited to a permanent destination and 67% (12) increased their housing stability (three additional households maintained their stability in a permanent residence).

This report provides detail on several components of HSSP based in part on reporting requirements in the authorizing legislation and the contract with Commerce including information on program implementation, services, the characteristics and outcomes of clients served, partnerships with school districts, technical assistance, and other topics.

Data Sources

To conduct the evaluation, BC collected and analyzed the following quantitative and qualitative data sources:

- *Individual-level HMIS Data:* In partnership with Commerce, BC collected Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data entered by grantees for all program participants including heads-of-households and any related clients covering the period from January 1, 2020 – April 30, 2020.
- *Grantee Narrative Reports:* Grantees submitted narrative reports in May 2020. The reports collected responses to questions related to housing services/supports, academic services/supports, partnerships, equity, and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
- *Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs):*² In partnership with Commerce, BC collected completed MOUs with partner districts/agencies for three grantees (Council for the Homeless,

¹ RCW 43.185C.340. Full text available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.185C.340>.

² RCW 43.185C.340(4). The HSSP law requires each grantee to provide a memorandum of understanding between grantees and partner schools or districts “defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party to identify, house, and support students experiencing homelessness. The memorandum must include:

(a) How housing providers will partner with school districts to address gaps and needs and develop sustainable strategies to help students experiencing homelessness; and (b) How data on students experiencing homelessness and their families will be collected and shared in accordance with privacy protections under applicable federal and state laws.”

Wellspring Family Services, and Yakima Neighborhood Health Services). As of May 31, 2020, two grantees (Opportunity Council and REACH) have not yet submitted MOUs.

- *Education Data*: BC collected publicly available data on students from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.³

Identifying Students

The term “students” is used throughout this paper to refer to HSSP clients who are classified as enrolled in or eligible to enroll in the public PK-12 school system. There is no field in the underlying HMIS data that reliably indicates which clients are current students. Thus, students are identified as any clients between ages 4 – 21 (inclusive) with *Last Grade Complete at Entry* that is not above grade 12 (e.g. GED or Associates degree) based on reported HMIS data.

All household-level analyses use data on the head-of-household (HoH), while student-level analyses use data on all clients classified as students regardless of whether the client was identified as a HoH, child of a HoH, or other type of household member. Thus, the two groups are not mutually exclusive.

Project Descriptions and Current Status

Commerce awarded five grantees across the state a total \$1.73 million of HSSP funding for fiscal years 2020-21. The name and location of each grantee is shown in Figure 1.

*Figure 1:
Location of HSSP Grantees*



³ OSPI data on students experiencing homelessness can be found at <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education/homeless-education-student-data>. Additional data are from OSPI’s Washington State Report Card available at <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

This section provides a brief description of each grantee’s HSSP project (as described in their initial proposal and/or in subsequent narrative reports) and outlines the current status on MOUs with partner districts. Adjustments to program models and implementation in response to COVID-19 are described in the following section and additional details on housing services, characteristics of students and families served, academic supports, and other topics are provided in subsequent sections.

Council for the Homeless

Council for the Homeless (CFTH) is a non-profit organization working in Clark County whose mission is to “provide community leadership, compelling advocacy, and practical solutions to prevent and end homelessness.”⁴ CFTH is partnering with Vancouver and Evergreen School Districts to increase family housing stability for McKinney-Vento eligible households. Under the program model, CFTH employs two Housing Navigators to work in select schools within each partner district to identify families, provide Diversion support, utilize flex funds to meet varying needs, and to connect students and families to other services in the community. In addition to direct work with clients, CFTH program staff attend a monthly Stable Family Housing Partnership meeting to work with community partners and culturally-specific agencies to engage in problem solving and discuss strengths, challenges, and connections to resources.

CFTH completed a MOU with both school districts in September 2019 that included a null and void clause if they were not awarded an HSSP grant. The partners have worked together using HSSP funds since the 2016-17 school year. The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner, program implementation, and some data sharing methods using voluntary release of information (ROI) forms.

Opportunity Council

Opportunity Council (OC) is a non-profit organization serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties. Their mission is to “help people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.”⁵ OC is partnering with Northwest Youth Services (NYS)⁶ to utilize HSSP funds to employ 2.5 FTEs including Housing Navigator case managers and a Student Stability Case Manager to bring additional supports and services to students experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability. They are offering in-school supports and partnering closely with McKinney-Vento liaisons to meet the needs of students. Their main strategies currently include utilizing diversion conversations, referrals to their CE system, providing temporary shelter in hotels/motels, and focusing on prevention assistance. Unaccompanied youth work with staff at NYS to access services including emergency shelter and housing navigation.

In their contact, OC designated Bellingham Public Schools as their partner district. However, they are now working with students and staff from multiple school districts in Whatcom County. As of May 31, 2020, OC have not submitted a completed MOU with any partners.

⁴ <https://www.councilforthehomeless.org/>

⁵ <https://www.opcco.org/>

⁶ <https://www.nwys.org/>

The REACH Center

The REACH Center (REACH) is a youth service center in Pierce County that provides a variety of services including housing support and has a mission to “equip and embolden young people to achieve success in education and employment through a strong network of dedicated partners.”⁷ REACH is partnering with the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District and the Bethel School District to support McKinney-Vento eligible youth ages 13-21 and their households. REACH will employ Peer Outreach Specialists to utilize Diversion, prevention, and a wide network of community partners to help support, navigate, and connect youth to needed resources. Their program has spent time so far meeting with partners and stakeholders to gain community buy in and raise awareness of their services. After the program launch in February, they have been using Diversion and prevention interventions, covering hotel/motel costs for emergency shelter, and providing support services including groceries, health and safety items, and cell phones.

As of May 31, 2020, REACH has not submitted an MOU with either partner district. In the recent narrative report, REACH noted that the MOUs have been sent to each district and are under review by district legal staff before the agreements are finalized.

Wellspring Family Services

Wellspring Family Services (WFS) is a nonprofit, multiservice agency working in Seattle and King County with a mission to “end the cycle of family homelessness.”⁸ WFS is working with Renton Public Schools and Seattle Public Schools in select buildings to provide strengths-based housing support services, navigation, rental assistance, and housing stability case management. They have made connections with both school districts, but their work with Seattle Public Schools has been on hold due to the COVID-19. They are hoping to expand services into more school buildings in Renton Public Schools. WFS is currently utilizing diversion and prevention as their main interventions and have highlighted work with Seattle Urban Academy as an additional private school partner who has been referring high school students who meet McKinney-Vento eligibility requirements.

WFS completed an MOU with Renton School District in February 2020. The agreement outlines the duties of each partner and include requirements for obtaining parental consent for services and some limited data sharing. The MOU process with Seattle School District is currently on hold.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (YHNS) is a nonprofit agency working in Yakima County with a mission to “provide affordable, accessible, quality health care, promote learning opportunities for students of health professions, end homelessness and improve quality of life in our communities.”⁹ YHNS has focused their HSSP funds in working with their local Educational Service District (ESD 105) which includes 14 school districts located in Yakima County. YHNS staff will work with the 23 McKinney-

⁷ <https://www.reachtacoma.org/>

⁸ <https://wellspringfs.org/>

⁹ <https://www.yhns.org/>

Vento liaisons in those districts to identify students experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability. Their program brings liaisons and YHNS staff together to identify students and families in need of assistance, provide resources and referrals to obtain housing, access support services, and provide connections to health care services. They have used funding during this reporting period to provide hotel/motel stays for households who either could not access shelter or had timed-out of shelter. They have also been assisting households with meeting their basic needs including gas, food, clothing, and hygiene products. YHNS has also partnered with Rod's House¹⁰ to provide services for unaccompanied minors including placing students in host homes.

YHNS completed an MOU with ESD 105 in January 2020 that includes an overview of actions each party agrees to take (e.g., attend meetings, identify/refer students, and more). The MOU includes reference to reporting information but does not contain specific provisions for data sharing. YHNS has also completed a similar MOU with Rod's House with provisions to provide reimbursement for host home matching for at least eight unaccompanied youth.

Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted grantees and partner districts in a wide variety of ways. School closures have presented a clear and significant barrier to providing services and were referenced by all grantees. School districts and buildings were the main source of referrals for each program and multiple agencies described a substantial decrease in the number and frequency of referrals. In addition, some grantees noted that school district work to identify students experiencing homeless and determine McKinney-Vento eligibility have been hampered by the crisis.

Prior to COVID-19, most program work and outreach were done in person but have now transitioned to staff working remotely, meeting with students and families over online platforms, and communicating with students and families via email and phone. In addition, program staff are no longer able to deliver resources to households or help transport students and families to and from appointments or to find housing.

Grantees have also noted a variety of other impacts including challenges recruiting/onboarding new staff, ensuring programs remain accessible while still gathering all necessary documentation, and additional housing barriers such as rental arrears limits in HSSP program guidelines.

To address these challenges, grantees are using several new procedures and approaches. Some grantees are adjusting methods to gather and verify documentation by using DocuSign, allowing clients to submit pictures of documents, or setting up secure drop box locations. Some grantees are also addressing accessibility by providing language support using phone and email translation services in partnership with schools.

In addition, some grantees are addressing the decline in referrals by using HMIS to identify potentially eligible students/families and referring those families to relevant school staff to ensure they are receiving school-based services. Schools may then provide referrals back to the HSSP program in some

¹⁰ <https://rodshouse.org/>

cases. One agency noted that the crisis has helped build trust with their school district around referrals and sharing student data and several have noted that partnerships with other agencies continue to grow.

Commerce has also helped agencies address these challenges by making temporary changes to HSSP grant guidelines to give agencies more flexibility. These changes include suspending several requirements related to income source documentation including allowing verbal statements and removing signature requirements for self-declaration forms and extending the number of months of rental arrears that programs may cover from three to six.¹¹

Housing Stability Services and Supports

This section describes information related to housing stability services and supports provided by HSSP grantees including the number of students and households served, identification and referrals, partnerships with Coordinated Entry, the types of programs offered based on HMIS data, specific support services, use of flexible funding, and housing-related barriers.

Number Served

As of April 30, 2020, HSSP grantees served an unduplicated total 274 individual clients in 87 households. A total of 157 clients were identified as students, which represents more than half (57%) of all clients served. Opportunity Council and Yakima Neighborhood Health Services have served the vast majority of clients. The two agencies combined served 70 households (80% of all households), 215 clients (78%), and 132 students (84%). REACH and Wellspring Family Services have served the fewest number of clients to date (Table 1).

*Table 1:
Households, Clients, and Students Served by Grantee*

| Agency Name(s) | Households | Clients | Students |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------|----------|
| Council for the Homeless | 14 | 52 | 21 |
| Opportunity Council | 40 | 107 | 70 |
| REACH | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Wellspring Family Services | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Yakima Neighborhood Health Services | 30 | 108 | 62 |
| Total | 87 | 274 | 157 |

Identification and Referrals

Grantees described a variety of methods used to identify and refer students to HSSP services. Typically, identification is conducted primarily by district McKinney-Vento liaisons and school support staff. Students that are experiencing homelessness based on the McKinney-Vento definition, attend a partner

¹¹ For more information, please see <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/hau-hssp-temporary-changes-may-2020-1.pdf>.

school district, and meet other program requirements (such as a household income below 50% of area median income) are then referred to HSSP grantees. However, in some cases students and families are first identified as potentially eligible by grantees and are referred to schools. A few grantees have been using HMIS to identify potentially eligible families (as described earlier) and this method has increased as referrals from districts have slowed due to COVID. Opportunity Council/Northwest Youth Services also identifies unaccompanied youth via phone calls, websites, or drop-ins and refers students that are interested in enrolling in school to the relevant district.

Referrals are routed to agency HSSP staff over phone, email, or through other online methods (e.g., shared spreadsheets). Grantees then reach out to students and families to offer services. Council for the Homeless planned to rely on the Family Community Resource Centers (school-based support offices/staff) in each partner district to refer eligible households using a warm hand-off but have had to adjust to remote referrals due to COVID. Several grantees discussed using frequent meetings and trainings with school staff in order to raise awareness of the program and to align procedures to ensure that referrals are conducted in a timely manner.

Partnerships with Coordinated Entry

The relationship between HSSP programs and Coordinated Entry (CE) varies across projects. Council for the Homeless and Opportunity Council are the administrative bodies of their county's CE system, while REACH and YNHS are both CE access points.

All grantees enroll HSSP households into HMIS upon enrollment, per grant guidelines. HMIS programs are set up in part based on HUD "literally homeless" eligibility categories. For example, REACH described offering Diversion to families in HUD categories 1 and 4 and offering prevention services to families in HUD categories 2 and 3. One grantee described the process of separating students and families into different HMIS programs based on residence at entry as a challenge.

Council for the Homeless reported offering all families the full range of services for which they are eligible and conducts CE assessments with families when needs beyond diversion are identified. Opportunity Council HSSP staff conduct housing assessments and then connect families to other case managers in the agency for additional services if needed.

REACH is able to conduct CE intakes and plans to refer to other agencies in the CE system if the volume of referrals increases beyond their agency's capacity. YHNS is also a CE access point and described working with their street outreach team to connect to students and families in local shelters. Wellspring Family Services is still building their partnership with their CE system.

Program Types

As described above, grantees enroll students and families into specific HMIS program types based on residence at entry. However, the program type as entered into HMIS may not always accurately describe the specific services families receive. Most grantees described using a combination of Diversion, prevention, and emergency shelter services.

However, Diversion is not a program type in HMIS and thus there does not appear to be a way to reliably identify who received Diversion and who did not. For example, Council for the Homeless has Diversion Navigators and describes using a Diversion approach but their programs are listed as either prevention or Rapid Re-Housing (RRH). It is unclear from the data whether all families categorized into the RRH program actually received Diversion services or whether some families received standard RRH services.

Based on these limitations in the data, the program types shown in Table 2 may provide an incomplete picture of how grantees are serving students and families. Just under half of enrollments for households (47%) and students (44%) were in homeless prevention programs. Enrollments were lowest in emergency shelter programs for both households and students, ranging between 10% to 11% of total enrollments.

*Table 2:
Households and Students Served by HMIS Program Type*

| Program Type | Households | | Students | |
|-------------------------|------------|---------|----------|---------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Emergency Shelter | 10 | 11% | 13 | 10% |
| Homelessness Prevention | 43 | 47% | 55 | 44% |
| Rapid Re-Housing | 13 | 14% | 19 | 15% |
| Services Only | 26 | 28% | 38 | 30% |
| Total | 92 | 100% | 125 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. The total number of households and students served by program exceeds the unduplicated counts of households and students due to concurrent enrollments in two or more programs.

Services Provided and Use of Flexible Funding

Grantees described providing a variety of services and supports regardless of the specific type of program. These include work to increase or secure income; housing navigation; obtaining personal documentation needed to access housing and/or employment; connecting households to mental health, legal aid, energy assistance and/or credit or financial assistance; reviewing landlord/tenant rights and leases; housing search support; and landlord advocacy among others.

Some of these services were captured in HMIS as shown in Table 3 (next page). A total of 38 households received at least one service captured by HMIS with a total of 71 services provided to households overall. Of households who received at least one service, 45% received rental assistance and 29% received assistance with security deposits/application fees.

Table 3:
Number and Percentage of Services Provided by Type and Household

| Service Type | By Total Services | | By Household | |
|--|-------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Rental Assistance (including rent arrears and landlord fees) | 19 | 27% | 17 | 45% |
| Security deposits/Application Fees | 14 | 20% | 11 | 29% |
| Hotel/motel expenses (when used as emergency shelter) | 12 | 17% | 7 | 18% |
| Essential household needs | 5 | 7% | 4 | 11% |
| Referred to CE | 4 | 6% | 4 | 11% |
| Utility Assistance | 4 | 6% | 3 | 8% |
| Debt Reduction Funds | 3 | 4% | 2 | 5% |
| Housing Search and Information | 2 | 3% | 2 | 5% |
| Moving cost assistance | 2 | 3% | 1 | 3% |
| Other costs related to access or maintaining housing | 2 | 3% | 2 | 5% |
| Case/Care Management | 1 | 1% | 1 | 3% |
| Household Goods | 1 | 1% | 1 | 3% |
| Landlord/Tenant Dispute Resolution | 1 | 1% | 1 | 3% |
| Transportation | 1 | 1% | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 71 | 100% | 38 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Grantees also used flexible funding to support families. A total of 62 individual payments using flexible funding were provided on behalf of 33 households. Grantees reported using a total of \$54,211 in flexible funding with an overall average across grantees of \$1,643 per household that received funds. Just under half (45%) of funds were used for rental assistance including rental arrears, while about 22% were used for hotel/motel expenses when used as an emergency shelter (Table 4, next page).

Table 4:
Use of Flexible Funds by Service Type, Households, and Amount

| Service Type | Payments | | Households | | Total Dollars | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent | Dollars | Percent | Avg. per Household |
| Rental Assistance (including rent arrears and landlord fees) | 19 | 31% | 17 | 52% | \$24,434 | 45% | \$1,437 |
| Security deposits/Application Fees | 14 | 23% | 11 | 33% | \$7,902 | 15% | \$718 |
| Hotel/motel expenses (when used as emergency shelter) | 11 | 18% | 6 | 18% | \$11,900 | 22% | \$1,983 |
| Essential household needs | 5 | 8% | 4 | 12% | \$279 | 1% | \$70 |
| Utility Assistance | 4 | 6% | 3 | 9% | \$2,164 | 4% | \$721 |
| Debt Reduction Funds | 3 | 5% | 2 | 6% | \$5,308 | 10% | \$2,654 |
| Other costs related to access or maintaining housing | 2 | 3% | 2 | 6% | \$509 | 1% | \$255 |
| Household Goods | 1 | 2% | 1 | 3% | \$535 | 1% | \$535 |
| Landlord/Tenant Dispute Resolution | 1 | 2% | 1 | 3% | \$80 | 0% | \$80 |
| Moving cost assistance | 1 | 2% | 1 | 3% | \$204 | 0% | \$204 |
| Transportation | 1 | 2% | 1 | 3% | \$895 | 2% | \$895 |
| Total | 62 | 100% | 33 | 100% | \$54,211 | 100% | \$1,643 |

Housing Barriers and Challenges

Grantees described several barriers and challenges to providing housing services to students and families. Many of the challenges were related to the impact of COVID and were described earlier. Other challenges were primarily related to larger systemic issues related to local housing markets or to programmatic barriers.

Several grantees reported that local rental stock is limited and that the housing that is available often has prohibitively high monthly rents. Grantees also reported barriers that delay or prevent obtaining leases such as requiring social security numbers or landlords who are unwilling to rent to students and families with no or unfavorable credit and rental histories. These barriers are particularly challenging for undocumented families and unaccompanied youth.

Other barriers include long wait times in CE housing pools and the amount of housing debt for many families. One grantee noted that additional support programs targeting debt would be beneficial.

A few grantees reported barriers related to HSSP program guidelines. As mentioned earlier, documentation requirements and limits on rental arrears payments have been especially challenging during COVID, though Commerce has temporarily addressed those particular barriers.

One grantee noted that the requirement to ask about LGBTQ status during program enrollment has been challenging in some situations in which other family members are present during intake. One grantee also noted that the new HSSP guidelines prevent making utility payments to homeowners on behalf of doubled-up families. This has proven to be a challenge because contributing to utilities is one way to help incentivize family and friends who provide living arrangements to work with doubled-up families and allow them to remain in place.

Grantees report using a variety of strategies to address these barriers including use of flex funds for other types of supports (e.g., basic needs and transportation), leveraging other funds to pay off housing debt, and engaging in landlord liaison work through both meeting directly with private landlords and working with other agencies or entities to work on larger landlord engagement strategies.

Characteristics, Housing Stability Histories, and Housing Outcomes

This section describes the characteristics and outcomes of students and families served by HSSP from the beginning of each project through April 30, 2020. Each of the measures described in this subsection are drawn from an analysis of individual-level HMIS data.

Given that these programs have been operating for a relatively short time and there have been few exits overall and few clients served by some grantees, most of the data are presented for the overall cohort of students and families served rather than disaggregated by individual grantee or other factors. In most cases, we present data on the unduplicated number of households and students to avoid overcounting due to concurrent enrollments in one or more programs.

Household and Student Characteristics

The majority of heads of households (67%) and students (75%) identified as white. Few households or students served to date identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or two or more races, ranging from 2% to 8% for households and 3% to 5% for students. Race was unknown or clients declined to identify a race for a total of 14% of households and 11% of students (Table 5, next page).

*Table 5:
Households and Students Served by Race*

| Race | Households | | Students | |
|---|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 7 | 8% | 8 | 5% |
| Black or African American | 2 | 2% | 5 | 3% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 4 | 5% | 6 | 4% |
| Two or More Races | 4 | 5% | 4 | 3% |
| White | 58 | 67% | 117 | 75% |
| Client refused | 8 | 9% | 9 | 6% |
| Unknown | 4 | 5% | 8 | 5% |
| Total | 87 | 100% | 157 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Over one-third of households (34%) and half of students (50%) were identified as Hispanic/Latino. Ethnicity was unknown (client refused or client doesn't know) for 10% of households and 5% of students (Table 6).

*Table 6:
Households and Students Served by Ethnicity*

| Ethnicity | Households | | Students | |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Hispanic/Latino | 30 | 34% | 79 | 50% |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 48 | 55% | 69 | 44% |
| Client refused | 7 | 8% | 7 | 4% |
| Client doesn't know | 2 | 2% | 2 | 1% |
| Total | 87 | 100% | 157 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Over two-thirds (70%) of heads of household identified as female. Among students, 45% identified as female and 50% identified as male. One head of household and one student identified as gender non-conforming, while gender identity was unknown for a total of 8% of households and 5% of students (Table 7, next page).

*Table 7:
Households and Students Served by Gender*

| Gender | Households | | Students | |
|---|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Female | 61 | 70% | 70 | 45% |
| Male | 18 | 21% | 79 | 50% |
| Gender Non-Conforming (i.e. not exclusively male or female) | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% |
| Client refused | 6 | 7% | 6 | 4% |
| Data not collected | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 87 | 100% | 157 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Last grade completed at entry was unknown (including client refused, client doesn't know, and data not collected or missing) for more than one-quarter (27%) of students. Just under half of students (45%) last completed prekindergarten through grade 5, while 15% of students last completed grades 9 through 11 (Table 8).

*Table 8:
Students Served by Last Grade Completed at Entry*

| Last Grade Completed at Entry | N | Percent |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| PK - 5th | 70 | 45% |
| 6th - 8th | 22 | 14% |
| 9th - 11th | 24 | 15% |
| Client refused | 4 | 3% |
| Data not collected | 15 | 10% |
| Client doesn't know | 1 | 1% |
| Missing | 21 | 13% |
| Total | 157 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Household size ranged from 1 person (24% of households) to 8 people (2%). The average household had 3.1 members (Table 9, next page).

Table 9:
Number of Clients per Household

| Household Size | N | Percent |
|----------------|-----|---------|
| 1 | 21 | 24% |
| 2 | 10 | 11% |
| 3 | 21 | 24% |
| 4 | 16 | 18% |
| 5 | 13 | 15% |
| 6 | 4 | 5% |
| 7 | 0 | 0% |
| 8 | 2 | 2% |
| Total | 87 | 100% |
| Mean | 3.1 | |
| Median | 3.0 | |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Just over three-quarters of household (76%) had two or more members and were classified as families and over half (52%) of households were families headed by a single person (i.e., household members did not include a spouse or partner). Among households with a single member, two heads of households were over the age of 21 while 19 were under or equal to the age of 21 (Table 10).

Many, if not all, of single member households headed by individuals aged 21 years or less may be unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) as defined by OSPI. However, the available data do not allow us to reliably identify all UHY as some may present to agencies as a member of a household as defined by HUD.

Table 10:
Household Composition by Family Status, Partner Status, and Age

| Household Composition | N | Percent |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Family (2 or more people) | 66 | 76% |
| <i>No spouse/partner</i> | 45 | 52% |
| <i>With spouse/partner</i> | 21 | 24% |
| Individual (1 person) | 21 | 24% |
| <i>HoH <= 21</i> | 19 | 22% |
| <i>HoH > 21</i> | 2 | 2% |
| Total | 87 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Housing Stability Prior to Entry

About 40% of households were living in temporary or doubled-up situations prior to entry including staying with family/friends or living in a hotel/motel. About 16% of households were living unsheltered

in a place not meant for habitation, while just over one-quarter (26%) were in stable housing prior to program entry including both subsidized and unsubsidized rentals (Table 11).

Table 11:
Household Residence Prior to Entry by Category and Type

| Residence Prior to Entry | N | Percent |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Stable Housing | 23 | 26% |
| <i>Rental by client in a public housing unit</i> | 4 | 5% |
| <i>Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</i> | 17 | 20% |
| <i>Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy</i> | 2 | 2% |
| Emergency Shelter | 9 | 10% |
| <i>Emergency Shelter</i> | 7 | 8% |
| <i>Safe Haven</i> | 2 | 2% |
| Fleeing Domestic Violence | 5 | 6% |
| <i>Place not meant for habitation</i> | 2 | 2% |
| <i>Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</i> | 3 | 3% |
| Temporary/Doubled-up | 35 | 40% |
| <i>Hotel/motel with no voucher</i> | 2 | 2% |
| <i>Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house</i> | 18 | 21% |
| <i>Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house</i> | 15 | 17% |
| Unsheltered | 14 | 16% |
| <i>Place not meant for habitation</i> | 14 | 16% |
| Unknown | 1 | 1% |
| <i>Missing</i> | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 87 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% or to category subtotals due to rounding.

Data on housing stability history (defined as the number of times homeless in the three years prior to program entry) was missing for over two-thirds (68%) of households. It is unclear from the data whether this item was simply not entered or whether missing data mean this is the first time the household has experienced homelessness over that period. About 6% of households have been homeless at least three times in the past three years (Table 12, next page).

Table 12:
Household Housing Stability History

| Number of times homeless in past 3 years | N | Percent |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| One Time | 17 | 20% |
| Two Times | 4 | 5% |
| Three Times | 1 | 1% |
| Four or more times | 4 | 5% |
| Client doesn't know | 1 | 1% |
| Data not collected | 1 | 1% |
| Missing | 59 | 68% |
| Total | 87 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Housing Outcomes

A total of 18 households exited a program as of April 30, 2020. Of those, 78% (14) exited to a permanent location including units owned by the client and both subsidized and unsubsidized rental units. One family exited to a place not meant for habitation (Table 13).

Table 13:
Household Destination at Exit by Category and Type

| Exit Destination | N | Percent |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Permanent | 14 | 78% |
| <i>Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</i> | 2 | 11% |
| <i>Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy</i> | 11 | 61% |
| <i>Rental by client, with HCV voucher (tenant or project based)</i> | 1 | 6% |
| Unstable | 4 | 22% |
| <i>Emergency Shelter</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Staying or living with family, temporary tenure</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Place not meant for habitation</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Other</i> | 1 | 6% |
| Total | 18 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Just over two-thirds (67%) of households that exited a program increased their housing stability including 28% that moved to permanent housing from an unsheltered situation and 22% that moved to permanent housing from a temporary/doubled-up situation. About 17% of families were able to maintain permanent housing, while another 17% had a negative outcome (Table 14, next page).

Table 14:
Changes in Housing Stability from Entry to Exit by Category and Type

| Entry Type | Exit Type | N | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Increase in Housing Stability | | 12 | 67% |
| <i>Emergency shelter/Safe Haven</i> | <i>Permanent</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Fleeing domestic violence</i> | <i>Permanent</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Temporary/doubled-up</i> | <i>Permanent</i> | 4 | 22% |
| <i>Unsheltered</i> | <i>Permanent</i> | 5 | 28% |
| <i>Unsheltered</i> | <i>Temporary Housing</i> | 1 | 6% |
| Maintained Permanent | | 3 | 17% |
| <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Permanent</i> | 3 | 17% |
| Negative Outcome | | 3 | 17% |
| <i>Emergency shelter/Safe Haven</i> | <i>Other/Unknown</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Temporary/doubled-up</i> | <i>Emergency Shelter</i> | 1 | 6% |
| <i>Unsheltered</i> | <i>Unsheltered</i> | 1 | 6% |
| Total | | 18 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Families that exited to a permanent location were enrolled in HSSP for nearly one week longer (31 days), on average, than families that exited to unstable situation (24 days). The mean number of days enrolled across all families was 29 days (Table 15).

Table 15:
Enrollment Length by Exit Type

| Days Enrolled in Program by Exit Type | Mean | Median |
|---------------------------------------|------|--------|
| Permanent (n=14) | 31 | 27 |
| Unstable (n=4) | 24 | 23 |
| Overall (n=18) | 29 | 25 |

School Partnerships and Academic Learning Supports

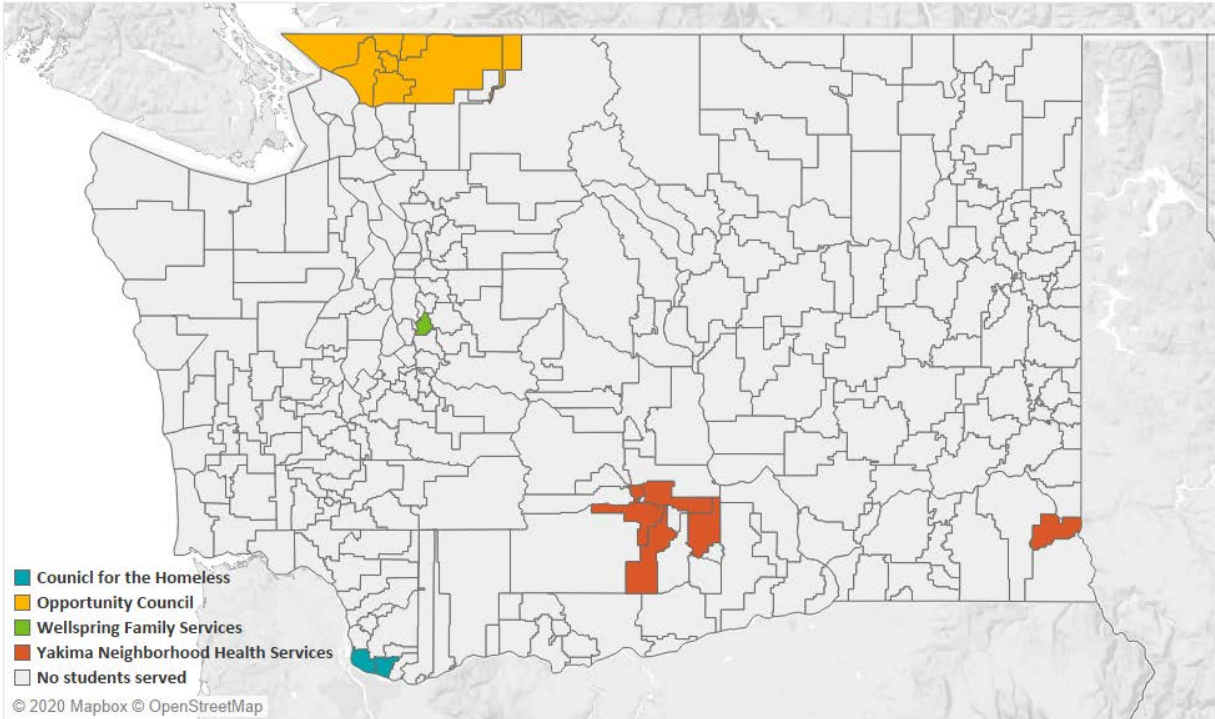
This section describes information related to school partnerships and academic supports including which districts students attend, data sharing, specific academic supports, and education-related barriers.

School District Partners

Grantees are working with several school districts across the state and the scope of each program varies. Yakima Neighborhood Health Services works across their educational service district to serve 14 school districts in Yakima County. Similarly, Opportunity Council reports working with many districts in Whatcom County. Other grantees are focused on individual districts and schools. Wellspring is focused on a few school buildings in Renton School District (and hopes to expand into Seattle Public Schools), Council for the Homeless and REACH each work with two local districts.

As shown in Figure 2 (below) and Table 16 (next page), students served by HSSP to date are from 16 separate school districts. Yakima School District had the highest proportion of students served (27%) followed by Bellingham Public Schools (11%) and Evergreen Public Schools in Clark County (10%). Data was missing or not collected for 19% of students.

*Figure 2:
Location of School Districts for Students Served by Grantee*



Note: School district data was not collected for students served by REACH. One student from Clarkston School District was served as part of household comprised of other students who attended the Yakima School District. Per HSSP grant guidelines, households are eligible if at least one student is enrolled in the partnering school(s) or school district(s).

Table 16:
Students Served by School District at Entry

| School District | N | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Bellingham Public Schools | 18 | 11% |
| Blaine School District | 1 | 1% |
| Clarkston School District | 1 | 1% |
| East Valley School District (Yakima) | 3 | 2% |
| Evergreen Public Schools | 15 | 10% |
| Ferndale School District | 6 | 4% |
| Lynden School District | 4 | 3% |
| Meridian School District | 2 | 1% |
| Mount Baker School District | 10 | 6% |
| Nooksack Valley School District | 7 | 4% |
| Renton School District | 1 | 1% |
| Sunnyside School District | 3 | 2% |
| Toppenish School District | 7 | 4% |
| Vancouver Public Schools | 6 | 4% |
| Wapato School District | 1 | 1% |
| Yakima School District | 43 | 27% |
| Data Not Collected | 3 | 2% |
| Missing/Not applicable | 26 | 17% |
| Total | 157 | 100% |

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. One student from Clarkston School District was served as part of a household with other students who attended the Yakima School District. Per HSSP grant guidelines, households are eligible if at least one student is enrolled in the partnering school(s) or school district(s).

Data Sharing

The HSSP authorizing statute emphasizes the importance of data sharing in order to facilitate cross-systems work to support students and requires that MOUs contain a description of “how data on students experiencing homelessness and their families will be collected and shared in accordance with privacy protections under applicable federal and state laws.”¹²

As described above, some grantees outline basic data sharing methods in their MOU, typically by using release of information forms for individual students and families. However, data sharing has been limited overall and grantees report some challenges in this area including hesitancy of districts to engage in data sharing conversations due to concerns about confidentiality.

In narrative reports, most grantees discussed the need to collect attendance data, but other outcomes (e.g., assessment scores, discipline, graduation) were not discussed as frequently. Case managers in one

¹² RCW 43.185C.340(4).

program are collecting attendance data for individual students, but that data has not yet been aggregated to the program level.

While the amount of data sharing to date is limited, many grantees noted the importance of and desire to engage with schools on data sharing and anticipate that efforts to create shared data tracking systems will increase once school closures due to COVID end.

Academic Supports

As described above, school closures have made providing academic support and tracking data particularly challenging. Grantees report that the primary focus during this time across all programs has been meeting student's basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, technology, and school supplies) rather than on academic support.

One grantee reported working with districts to support students with Individualized Education Plans for special education and behavior support plans. Some grantees also discussed working with districts to help disconnected students get re-enrolled in school. However, data on the specific types and amounts/frequency of academic supports (such as tutoring or credit retrieval) was largely unavailable.

Upon reopening of schools, agencies intend to provide a variety of services and outreach efforts including hosting school resource fairs, tutoring assistance, attendance support and tracking, and overall a deeper focus on partnership strategies to provide academic stability.

School Partnership and Academic Support Barriers and Challenges

While most of the challenges to working with schools and providing academic supports reported to date are related to COVID and setting up data sharing methods (see relevant sections above for additional discussion), some grantees also reported additional barriers.

One grantee noted that they are working with several different districts in their county and that each district has its own unique procedures and internal culture. In addition to navigating and integrating those differences, the grantee also notes that engagement by district staff varies. Another grantee reported that the program has been slowed due to turnover in the McKinney-Vento liaison position at one partner district.

While there have been some challenges, grantees report relatively close working relationships with partner districts and note they have been working to overcome barriers through ensuring frequent communication and collaboration using remote meetings, shared referral tracking spreadsheets, and similar methods.

Equity and Access to HSSP-funded Services

This section describes how HSSP grantees have addressed equity in service provision, examines access to HSSP by comparing characteristics of students served by HSSP to state and local data from OSPI

including comparisons of race/ethnicity and residence at entry, and discusses services for doubled-up students.

Addressing Racial Equity

The HSSP authorizing statute prioritizes funding to organizations that demonstrate a commitment to develop and implement evidence-informed strategies to address racial inequities.¹³ While some grantees acknowledge disproportionality and disparity in their systems and a few are taking concrete action steps, overall grantees are still thinking through their approach in addressing racial equity and relatively few specific strategies were reported.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services has been actively partnering with local Tribal Schools and report spending time working with the Yakama Nation. They also report that the majority of the clients they have served so far are Hispanic/Latino.

Council for the Homeless reported that the majority of the clients they have served are people of color and that many of the families they work with have openly shared their experiences of discrimination and expressed a sense of relief in being able to talk openly about the challenges they face. The agency looks at disaggregated data to identify patterns and meets monthly with culturally specific organizations and other providers in order discuss challenges and share knowledge. They note that culturally specific group participation at the meetings has been valuable and has helped to increase both the cultural competency of staff and the agencies overall responsiveness.

Opportunity Council has identified many barriers for families of color related to discrimination in the housing market such as landlords sharing inaccurate information and increased patrolling and enforcement of rental rules. They intend to increase advocacy efforts, support clients with translation services, and educate landlords about landlord/tenant laws to address housing discrimination.

Access to HSSP

One way that inequity may manifest in housing programs is through differential access for students and families of color. To explore this issue, we compared HMIS data on race and ethnicity of students served in HSSP to data for all students experiencing homeless in partner districts and in Washington State collected from OSPI.

OSPI combines race/ethnicity into a single measure rather than separately reporting race and ethnicity as in HMIS. In order to more accurately compare the two data sets, we constructed a variable to match OSPI data in which Hispanic/Latino students of any race are combined in one group.

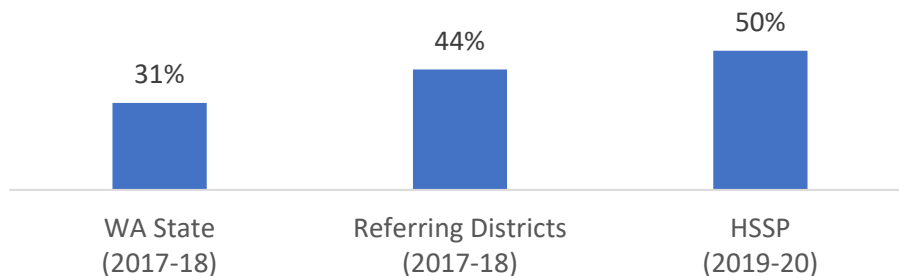
Unfortunately, OSPI data is suppressed in some cases in order to protect student privacy. That is, in some individual districts the counts and percentage of students in certain race/ethnicity categories were unavailable. Thus, we are unable to compare characteristics for each individual group.

¹³ RCW 43.185C.340(5).

However, we are able to use the available data to present a comparison of the proportion of Hispanic/Latino students and an estimated proportion of students of color overall (including Hispanic/Latino). We compare HSSP grantees to all referring districts combined (as listed in Table 16) and to the state overall. The OSPI data is from the 2017-18 school year. This is the most recent year available, but please note that district populations may have changed somewhat over time.

As shown in Figure 3, 50% of the students served by HSSP grantees identified as Hispanic/Latino. This proportion is higher than the overall population of students experiencing homelessness in state overall (31%) and referring districts (44%).

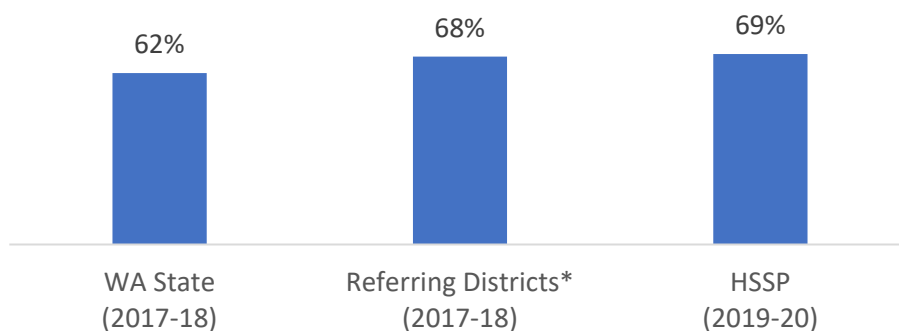
*Figure 3:
Percentage of Students Served/Identified who are Hispanic/Latino*



Source: Data for WA state from Dyer, M., & Ward, J. (2019). Update: Homeless students data (Report to the Legislature). Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Retrieved from <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/homelessed/pubdocs/2019-01-update-homeless-students-data.pdf>. Data for referring districts retrieved from <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education/homeless-education-student-data>.

As shown in Figure 4 (next page), 69% of the students served by HSSP grantees identified as students of color. This proportion is higher than the overall population of students experiencing homelessness in state overall (62%) and roughly the same as referring districts (68%).

Figure 4:
Percentage of Students Served/Identified who are Students of Color



Source: Data for WA state from Dyer, M., & Ward, J. (2019). Update: Homeless students data (Report to the Legislature). Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Retrieved from <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/homelessed/pubdocs/2019-01-update-homeless-students-data.pdf>. Data for referring districts retrieved from <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education/homeless-education-student-data>.

* The percentage of students of color in referring districts are estimated to account for data suppression. The total percentage may range between 68% - 69%.

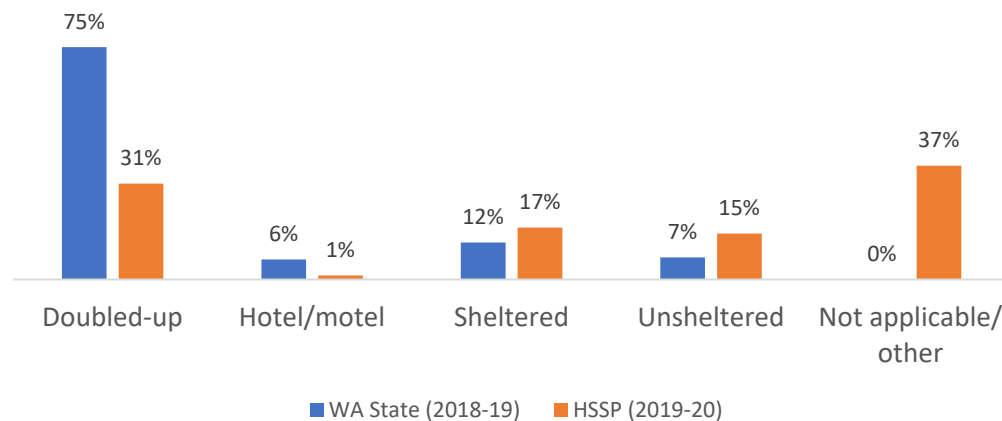
Services and Supports for Doubled-up Students

One of the defining characteristics of HSSP is the ability to serve students and families experiencing homelessness based on the McKinney-Vento definition rather than HUD criteria. In particular, HSSP programs are able to serve students and families who are living in doubled-up situations. However, many agencies do not necessarily have experience working with this population.

To explore access to HSSP for doubled-up families, we compared HMIS data reported by grantees to OSPI data. We categorized each residence at entry into the most applicable OSPI category (e.g., staying or living with friend/family is categorized as doubled-up). Households with their own rental at entry are categorized as “Not applicable/other.” We present data for students overall (rather than by household) to align with OSPI student-level reported. We present OSPI data on all students experiencing homelessness in Washington State and are unable to compare to referring districts due to data suppression.

As shown in Figure 5 (next page), 31% of students served by HSSP were living in doubled-up situations. This is well below the percentage of doubled-up students in the state (75%). This indicates that students living in doubled-up situations may not receive referrals to HSSP in proportion to the population overall. Additional data on how and why students are referred to HSSP may help illuminate underlying reasons for this difference in future evaluations.

Figure 5:
Percentage of Students Served/Identified by Nighttime Residence/Residence at Entry



Source: Data for WA State retrieved from <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education/homeless-education-student-data>.

In narrative reports, grantees discussed serving students living in doubled-up situations. Most grantees noted that doubled-up students are not eligible for most HUD-funded programs and described using Diversion and flexible funding to serve these students when possible.

Opportunity Council reported that doubled-up families were not eligible for housing supports in Whatcom County’s Coordinated Entry System, but that unaccompanied youth between the ages of 17.5 – 24 living doubled were eligible for a housing pool operated by Northwest Youth Services.

Due to COVID, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services has been cautioning against doubling up with friends or family due to social distancing recommendations and has instead worked to provide doubled-up families with shelter in hotels/motels.

Outside of this intervention, there seems to be a need for more opportunities and strategies to effectively engage and meet the needs of doubled-up households moving forward.

Technical Assistance

This section provides detail on technical assistance provided to grantee by BC to date and discusses technical assistance plan for the remaining grant year.

Assistance Provided

Communication has been ongoing with all grantees through email, phone, and web meetings. Each grantee had two one-hour check in phone calls which occurred within the months of February - April. Assistance has also been provided through email communication related to questions or additional clarity around HSSP. Some examples of the assistance provide include walking through the eligibility



process to serve a multi-generational household and how to navigate concerns associated with low district referrals.

All agencies were invited to join Building Changes' School Housing network. The goal of the network is to bring school and service professionals together to learn from others, identify and strengthen approaches for serving students experiencing homelessness, and leverage opportunities to impact policy. This was once a monthly web-based meeting that has now shifted to bi-weekly to offer a supportive space amidst COVID-19. Some grantees have engaged with this opportunity and one has given a presentation to the network about their work with unaccompanied youth and youth experiencing homelessness.

Plan Moving Forward

All grantees will attend our first Learning Circle which was scheduled via Doodle Poll for July 2nd, 2020. We hope to bring program staff together to share the work, support each other through emerging challenges, and to briefly review the first narrative report. As a group, we will decide on the frequency and needs of Learning Circles moving forward. In future Learning Circles, we hope to invite school district/building partners to gain their perspective and potentially engage OSPI's HSSP grantees to explore opportunities to systemically align the work.

As we work through the phases of COVID-19, we will offer monthly check-in calls for all grantees and continue ongoing communication. We intend to plan site visits in fall/winter depending on how agencies are doing and where our communities are with the pandemic.

We hope to continue to explore opportunities for additional training and technical assistance in these specific areas highlighted in the narrative reports:

- Guidance and strategies to serve doubled-up students and households,
- Addressing racial and gender equity in program work,
- How Diversion strategies are being utilized in all grantee communities, and
- Data sharing and efforts to expand partnership to include more focus on student attendance and academic outcomes.