PRELIMINARY STRATEGIC PLAN

Prevention of Youth Homelessness

Washington State
Department of
Commerce

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 357, LAWS OF 2020 (96)

**OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH
PREVENTION**

January 2021

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Lisa Brown, Director

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Executive Summary

Overview

The 2020 Washington State Legislature included a proviso in the 2020 supplemental operating budget (Chapter 357, Laws of 2020) to support the development of a draft strategic plan addressing the issue of youth homelessness in the state:

> *(96) $75,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 is provided solely for the department of commerce to co-lead a prevention workgroup with the department of children, youth, and families. The workgroup shall focus on preventing youth and young adult homelessness and other related negative outcomes. The workgroup shall consist of members representing the department of social and health services, the employment security department, the health care authority, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the Washington student achievement council, the interagency workgroup on youth homelessness, community-based organizations, and young people and families with lived experience of housing instability, child welfare involvement or justice system involvement.*

> *(a) The workgroup must develop a preliminary strategic plan to be submitted to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2020 that details:*

> *(i) How existing efforts in this area are coordinated;*

> *(ii) The demographics of youth involved in homelessness and other related negative outcomes;*

> *(iii) Recommendations on promising interventions and policy improvements; and*

> *(iv) Detail and descriptions of current prevention funding streams.*

Table 1: Locations of Proviso Elements in the Plan

Strategic Plan Requirement	Location in this Document
(i) How existing efforts in this area are coordinated;	How Existing Efforts are Coordinated
(ii) The demographics of youth involved in homelessness and other related negative outcomes;	Demographics of Population
(iii) Recommendations on promising interventions and policy improvements; and	Promising Programs
(iv) Detail and descriptions of current prevention funding streams.	Prevention Funding Streams

This report is a preliminary strategy that outlines the underlying reasons for youth and young adult homelessness, sets a framework around prevention and identifies gaps and highlights early recommendations and immediate next steps.

Key Findings

Youth who are Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQ2+ and youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities experience housing instability disproportionally. Youth experience housing instability because of a complex set of reasons. Each young person's experiences and story of housing instability is different. However, commonalities in these narratives suggest that youth homelessness is due to several interrelated root causes. These root causes can be categorized under three major factors:

1. Structural Factors

2. System

3. Individual and Relational Factors

In our conversation with young people, the most commonly identified cause of homelessness was interpersonal and individual factors. In many cases, however, multiple individual and interpersonal factors intersected with gaps in the system and structural factors leading to housing instability.

Systems and services are insufficient at multiple levels to provide the support that youth and families need to navigate adolescence. There are very few programs and services to help develop parenting skills or supports for parents experiencing challenges with their youth. Many available services are not funded to make them universally accessible outside of the child welfare and the juvenile justice system. This forces families to become formally involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems to access services they might need. While trauma-informed, healing-centered programs exist, they are not funded at a level that makes them consistently available across the state. These gaps, and many more in the systems' approach to helping youth and families, can cause youth to experience housing instability and other negative outcomes.

Early Gaps Identified in State System Led Interventions

Gaps identified through conversation with lived experts, community organizations and government stakeholders working across different agencies are:

- Primary prevention services related to youth homelessness or family crisis support are not funded and available consistently across Washington, and families have to interact with formal systems to get help.
- Siloes across different agencies and departments create a system of disconnected services that youth and families have to navigate.
- Schools can play a role in primary prevention but do not have the resources to do so.
- Programs and services currently in place to serve youth and families are not working for communities of color.
- Youth labeled as "high functioning" autistic slip through the system siloes without receiving appropriate supportive services.
- Programs, services and expectations designed for able-bodied, neuro-typical youth are not appropriate to effectively serve autistic youth.
- Funding and policies to address homelessness are focused on tertiary prevention, causing a lack of services and supports for caregivers in the early stages of a crisis.
- Prevention programs lack flexible and integrated funding streams.

Programs designed for able-bodied, cisgender,[1] neurotypical, white, middle-class, English-speaking, urban youth and families do not translate across intersections of race, culture, language, gender identity, class, location, neuro-diversity and historical marginalization. It is important to ensure that lived experts co-design services and solutions to ensure their relevancy and impact.

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[1] A person whose gender corresponds to the gender assigned at birth.

Recommendations and Next Step

Recommendations

There are three key intermediate recommendations from its initial research and analysis:

1. Create and establish a coordinating body focused on preventing unaccompanied youth homelessness, unnecessary system involvement with child welfare, juvenile justice system and other negative outcomes. The coordinating body should include state agency representatives, legislators, practitioners, youth and caregiver lived experts.

   - Amend RCW 43.03.220 to allow compensation for lived experts' participation in the coordinating body and related state-level advisory groups to allow for an inclusive, equitable approach to informing the government.

2. Build the data infrastructure to measure the prevalence of youth and young adult homelessness.

   - Develop a youth homelessness database with data sharing between the Office of Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) and Research and Data Analysis (RDA) to ensure a comprehensive youth homelessness measure.

3. Provide funding to the Department of Children, Youth and Families to redesign their Family Reconciliation Service to be a community-based service for youth and families focused on primary prevention.

Next Step

OHY will collaborate with community organizations [Innovation Human Trafficking Collaborative](#) and [Communities of Color Coalition](#) to co-design a statewide strategy for prevention with BIPOC youth lived experts of homelessness and caregivers.

Introduction

Background

This report complements other recent prevention-related efforts and should be considered alongside other resources and initiatives, including:

- Families and Youth in Crisis
- SB 6560, Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Systems of Care
- SB 5290, eliminating the use of detention for status offenders
- Families First Prevention Services Act
- Reducing Poverty & Inequality in Washington State: 10-year plan for the future

Understanding the Root Causes of Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

To prevent youth homelessness, it is important to understand its underlying causes. The Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) defines homelessness or housing instability as - lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including sleeping in emergency shelters, on the streets, in cars, in other unsafe or unstable places, or "couch-surfing" and "doubled-up" where a person has no legal right to stay. OHY focuses on housing and supportive services for youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 24 who are unaccompanied by a parent or an adult caregiver.
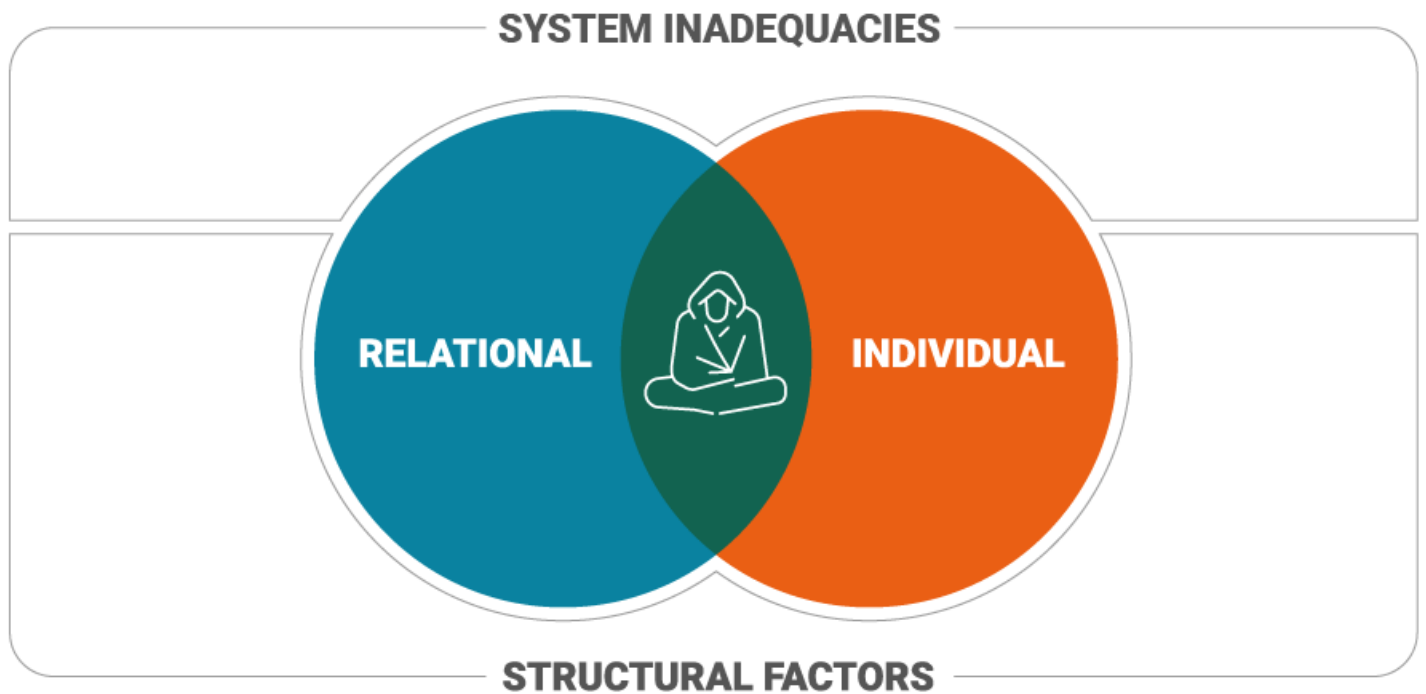
Image 1 shows the complex interaction between the structural factors, systemic gaps, relational and individual factors that lead to a young person experiencing housing instability.

Youth experience housing instability because of a complex set of reasons. Each young person's experiences and their story of housing instability is different. However, commonalities in these narratives suggest that youth homelessness is due to several interrelated root causes. A Way Home Canada's Roadmap for the

Prevention of Youth Homelessness[2] identifies that complex interaction among three major categories, namely **structural factors**, **system inadequacies** and **individual and relational factors,** impacts a young person's housing stability.

Conversations with providers working with youth and families and young people experiencing homelessness have highlighted many seen and unseen factors that cause housing instability among the three major categories identified above, including:

1. Structural Factors

Structural factors are large systemic issues that are intractable from an individual's perspective. They include historical harms, practices, policies and processes that continue to impact communities today. Structural factors also determine the types of actions that an individual can take in response to a problem or the range of actions they can even consider.

- Poverty
- Racism (in housing, jobs, education access, service access)
- Settler colonialism (on-going erasure of culture, language and religious practices)
- Historical trauma (from losing language, land, culture, religion and practices)
- Lack of economic opportunities
- Lack of affordable housing
- Ableism (discrimination based on preference for able-bodied, neuro-typical adults)
- Historical medical practices based on bias against people with mental illness and developmental disabilities
- Social stigma of mental illness

2. System Inadequacies

The system includes government agencies in charge of designing and implementing programs and services for people at the state and local levels. System inadequacies or gaps occur when youth and families' underlying needs are not met through existing programs and services offered by the different agencies making up the larger system. This could be because:

- Types of services designed by non-lived experts working in government are not appropriate for age group, family type, neuro-diversity or culture.
- Services and programs are not available consistently across the state.
- Lack of coordination across agencies and departments reduces the effectiveness of programs and the scope of impact.
- Lack of engagement strategies reduces the awareness of the programs and services available.
- Siloes across different agencies and departments create a system of disconnected services that youth and families have to navigate.
- In many communities, families have to interact with formal systems to get help for their youth because supports and resources are not available through community-based organizations. The stigma of being system-involved and the fear of deeper system involvement discourages families from accessing help.

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[2] Gaetz, S., Schwan, K., Redman, M., French, D., & Dej, E., (2018), "The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness," A. Buchnea (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

3. Individual and Relational Factors

Individual factors are attributes at an individual level that affect a young person's experiences. For example, a young person's undiagnosed or untreated behavioral health issues will affect relational factors within the household, increasing family conflict and creating an environment resulting in the young person leaving the household or being kicked out. Relational factors such as the death of a caregiver or domestic violence are interpersonal issues that can also negatively affect housing stability:

- Undiagnosed or untreated Mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- Trauma (immigration, neglect, abuse)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Intellectual or developmental disability
- Autism
- Domestic violence (caregiver, partner)
- Parental substance use disorder
- Death of a caregiver
- Failed adoption

The adolescent period, from ages 12 through 25, is a key developmental window during which significant changes happen physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially. The adolescent brain is malleable and highly sensitive to its environment. The adolescent brain is vulnerable to impact from physical harms, such as drugs or environmental toxins, as well as psychological ones, such as trauma and stress. It is also more responsive to positive influences, making interventions that occur during this time significant in their influence on young people's success and stability into adulthood.

Positive adult guidance is essential as young people navigate a variety of situations including puberty, peer pressure, and identity formation, particularly gender and sexual orientation.

The lists under each of the domains above are not exhaustive and will continue to expand as we learn more. In our conversations with young people, the most commonly identified cause of homelessness was interpersonal factors and individual factors to a lesser degree. In many cases, multiple individual and interpersonal factors intersected with gaps in the system and structural factors leading to housing instability. For example, a Black youth with autism might not be diagnosed at an early age compared to their white peers,[3] leading to misdiagnosis and strong disciplinary measures. The underlying behavioral health needs of the Black student go unmet. Parents might not obtain tools to help them navigate related issues. The structural factors of racism and implicit bias intersect with individual factors to impact students' learning outcomes.

As highlighted in Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada's Roadmap for Prevention Youth Homelessness, it is important to note that the structural factors and systemic gaps create the conditions where individual and interpersonal factors result in homelessness. It is vital to recognize the need for programs and services that support both caregivers and youth to prevent youth homelessness. This approach is termed as two-generational (2Gen) or multigenerational in families and communities where the caregivers are grandparents and extended family members.

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[3] National Center for Biotechnology Information, Mandell, Wiggins, Carpenter, et al, "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in the Identification of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, American Journal of Public Health, (2009), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2661453/

Defining Prevention

The Office of Homeless Youth team uses a public health approach to look across a continuum to ensure prevention can happen at multiple levels. The team developed a modified prevention continuum for youth homelessness, as shown below in Image 2.
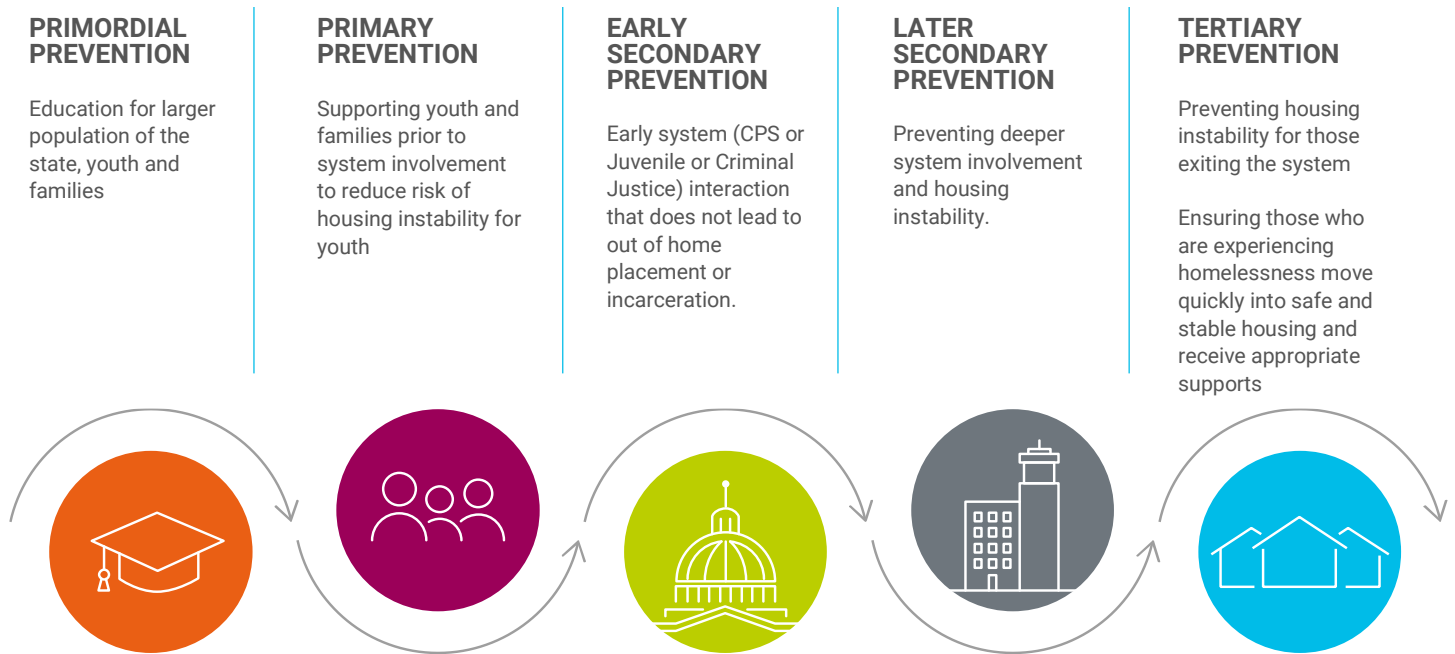
PRIMORDIAL PREVENTION	PRIMARY PREVENTION	EARLY SECONDARY PREVENTION	LATER SECONDARY PREVENTION	TERTIARY PREVENTION
Education for larger population of the state, youth and families	Supporting youth and families prior to system involvement to reduce risk of housing instability for youth	Early system (CPS or Juvenile or Criminal Justice) interaction that does not lead to out of home placement or incarceration.	Preventing deeper system involvement and housing instability.	Preventing housing instability for those exiting the system

Ensuring those who are experiencing homelessness move quickly into safe and stable housing and receive appropriate supports |

Image 2 highlights the continuum along which prevention of youth homelessness should occur.

- **Primordial Prevention:** Due to the complexity of young people's experiences, the continuum starts with prevention efforts intended to provide support, resources and information to all families with adolescents in the state. These include mass media messaging or behavior change messaging.

- **Primary prevention** approaches are more targeted to families and youth who might be at risk of conflict, housing instability or system involvement. Primary prevention strategies are intended to support families before a young person experiences housing instability or system involvement.

- **Secondary prevention** The interventions in this space focus on preventing deeper system involvement, such as out of home placement or incarceration. Because of the array of programs and processes across systems, it is important to break secondary prevention into two separate segments:

Tertiary (Few youth)

Early & Later secondary (Some youth and families)

Primary (Many youth and families)
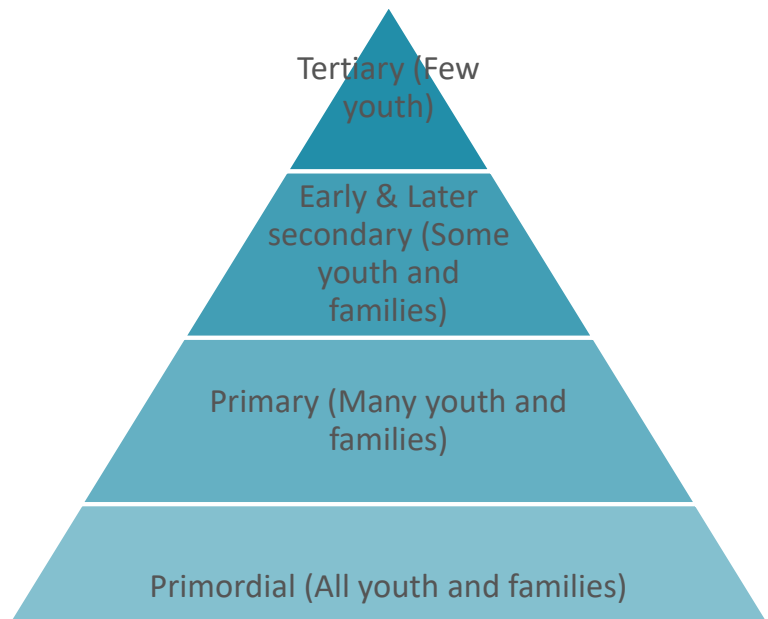
Primordial (All youth and families)

Image 3 shows the scope of the prevention efforts across the continuum. Primordial prevention efforts focus on a much larger population and is intended to reduce the pipeline of youth requiring more intensive prevention supports.

1. **Early secondary prevention** - Interventions that focus on supporting youth and families who may have intersected with the juvenile justice and child protective services to prevent deeper system involvement.
2. **Later secondary** - Interventions that focus on supporting youth and families formally involved in public systems such as the juvenile justice or foster care system

○ **Tertiary Prevention:** Work done by the homeless response system, where resources are designed to quickly move a young person who is actively experiencing homelessness into safe and stable housing to prevent further harm. Here, community organizations connect youth and young adults with resources that they need to stay stably housed. These resources include employment, case management, mental and behavioral health supports and housing navigation services.

To learn more about programs in state systems that fall across this continuum, refer to Appendix A.

Previous work on prevention conducted by OHY and DCYF has focused on different parts of the prevention continuum. For example, the report, Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Care, focuses on preventing youth homelessness after exiting from a system, which is Later Secondary Prevention. The resources managed by OHY are focused mostly on Tertiary Prevention, ensuring youth and young adults experiencing homelessness can be quickly housed. The Families and Youth in Crises report was one of the first reports to focus on primary and early secondary prevention. On-going work concerning this proviso will focus on **primordial, primary and early secondary prevention** to complement and add to existing bodies of work.

Approach for the Report
The Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) has conducted a landscape analysis through conversations with youth and family-serving organizations[4] across the state and reviews of existing literature in the space of prevention. OHY has also convened regular meetings with representatives from agencies and community organizations that work with youth and families in a prevention capacity.

Agencies Include:
○ Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) at the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)
○ Adolescent Programs at DCYF
○ Department of Early Learning at DCYF
○ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
○ Libraries
○ Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA)
○ Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Developmental Disability Administration (DDA)
○ Economic Services Administration (ESA) at DSHS
○ Health Care Authority's (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)

Community Organizations Include:
○ Center for Children and Youth Justice
○ Boys and Girls Club

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[4] Organizations include: Room One, Consejo, Multi-Service Center, Cocoon House, Northwest Youth Services, Black Trans Task Force, WAGAP, Family Promise of Skagit Valley, Cornerstone 253, SeaMar, Arc of King County, Washington Association of School Social Workers, Innovation Human Trafficking Collaborative

- Arc of King County

Other state agencies that are part of the Interagency Workgroup on Youth Homelessness[5] have been informed about the prevention work. The youth lived experts of housing instability joined the team to help synthesize the findings to document the following request articulated in the proviso.

Phases of the Work

July - December 2020	December 2020 - May 2021	May 2021-July 2021	August 2021
•Understanding root causes •Understanding state systems •Preliminary report	•Co-design with lived experts disproportionately impacted by homelessness	•Gather feedback from lived experts, community and advocacy organizations	•Final strategic plan on prevention of youth homelessness

Image 4 highlights the phases of the work required to develop a robust youth homelessness prevention strategy.

Developing a prevention strategy for youth homelessness for Washington requires a multistage approach that involves multiple government agencies and community organizations.

Starting in January 2021, the team will engage lived experts to create a steering committee to lead the development of the final strategic plan with recommendations to the Legislature and state agencies on system changes and services needed in the community to prevent youth homelessness. Employment Security Department and the Washington Student Achievement Council will be consulted in future phases of the work. Please see the Next Steps section for details on the steering committee.

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[5] Washington State Department of Commerce, " Office of Homeless Youth Committees and Workgroup," https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/office-of-youth-homelessness/office-of-homeless-youth-committees-and-work-group/

How Existing Efforts are Coordinated

Overview

At the state level, multiple agencies or programs they fund intersect with youth and families at different times of need. Some of these systems include the Department of Children Youth & Families (Early Learning, Child Protection Services, Child Welfare, and Family Reconciliation Services), Developmental Disabilities Administration within DSHS, Economic Services Administration within DSHS (food assistance, cash assistance, medical eligibility, and refugee and immigration assistance), Health Care Authority, libraries and the Office of Homeless Youth.

At the county level, organizations such as the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA) coordinates programs, practice and policy change across the state.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is a state agency that provides guidance, tools and resources to 295 school districts and six State-Tribal Compact Schools.

Community organizations that are prevalent across the state, such as the Boys and Girls Club and Arc, also intersect with youth and families with different levels of need.

PRIMORDIAL PREVENTION	PRIMARY PREVENTION	EARLY SECONDARY PREVENTION	LATER SECONDARY PREVENTION	TERTIARY PREVENTION

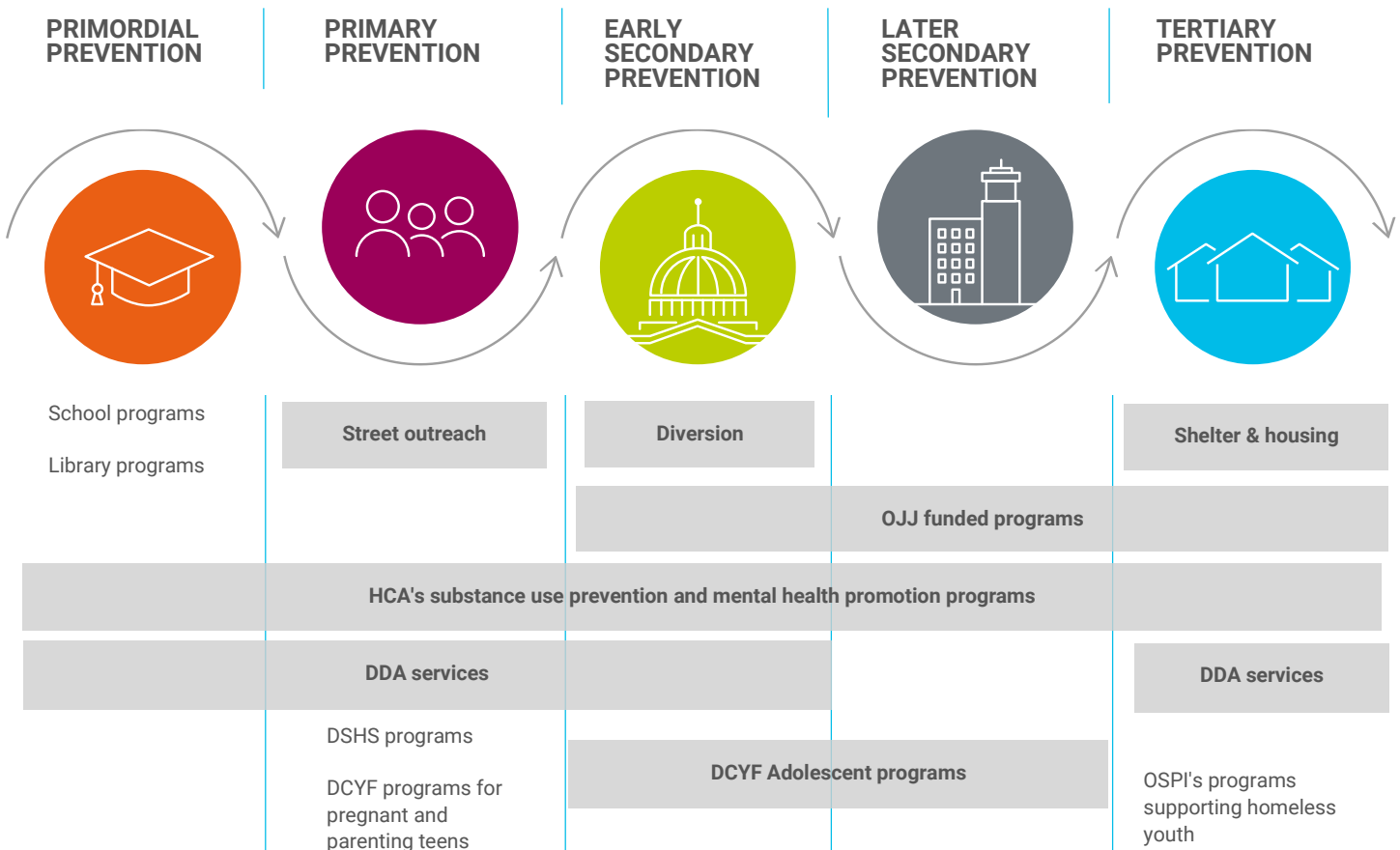| PRIMORDIAL PREVENTION	PRIMARY PREVENTION	EARLY SECONDARY PREVENTION	LATER SECONDARY PREVENTION	TERTIARY PREVENTION
School programs Library programs	Street outreach	Diversion		Shelter & housing
		OJJ funded programs		
HCA's substance use prevention and mental health promotion programs				
DDA services				DDA services
	DSHS programs DCYF programs for pregnant and parenting teens	DCYF Adolescent programs		OSPI's programs supporting homeless youth

Image 5 shows high-level information on the spectrum of offers across agencies based on the prevention continuum. Some agencies serve a larger population of youth and families, and others focus their prevention efforts on a specific sub-population of the state.

Each state agency has a mandate accompanied by funding streams that direct what programs are established and what services are provided. Programs for youth and families in the prevention space that fall along the continuum are split across different state-level agencies.

Details of prevention-related programs funded by state entities can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Absence of Consistent Coordination and Standards Across Agencies Create Service Issues

Through conversations with stakeholders across systems that serve young people, it became clear that coordination across different agencies is limited, unstructured and does not occur consistently. In places where coordination occurs across more than one system, it is not institutionalized or structured. In many cases, it is driven by individuals stepping out of their role to coordinate across systems to ensure that the services are available and easy to access for the young person and/or family being served. This form of coordination is based strongly on relationships with the potential for coordination to fail when the individual leaves or transitions to a new role.

Once a key driver of cross-system coordination leaves their role, the connections are lost, and the individual systems go back to providing services in a siloed manner. For the youth and families experiencing these "quality of service deserts," the level of frustration is understandable. Additionally, these changes in care and coordination can account for many system failings to reduce and/or limit homelessness. Some agencies coordinate with local service providers but not across other agencies. Finally, the broad range of service coordination approaches results in inequitable outcomes for youth and families by geography, system, and even case manager. This inequity in outcomes and access must be corrected if homelessness is to be eliminated in our state.

> Individuals in agencies take personal initiative to coordinate with other partners to meet the needs of families. When that individual leaves, the effort falls apart leaving youth and families frustrated and feeling abandoned.

GAP: Primary prevention services related to youth homelessness or family crisis support are not funded at a level making them available consistently across the state, and families have to interact with formal systems to get help.
Primary prevention services and programs to support youth and families are currently designed and run by community-based organizations (CBOs) that adjust their programs based on the needs they see in the community. CBOs rely on state, local and private funding to keep their programs available in the community. In areas where there is a strong network of community-based providers, youth and parents have more variety of services to consider. In other areas of the state, the juvenile justice system is the default response to resolving situations such as family conflict and crisis, housing and mental health needs. The stigma of being involved with systems such as juvenile justice or child welfare, and the fear of deeper system involvement discourages families from accessing help. Additionally, families have to admit to a "deficit" to qualify for services through a court or for form a court filing such as At-Risk youth petition.

Community-based programs that proactively offer support to youth and families experiencing crises are not funded and available uniformly across the state.

At the state level, prevention efforts across different agencies are siloed by agency mandates and requirements of different funding streams. Each agency defines its prevention efforts differently. There is no cohesive effort around the prevention of youth homelessness and other negative outcomes.

GAP: Siloes across different agencies and departments create a system of disconnected services that youth and families have to navigate.
Lack of coordination across agencies and departments reduces the effectiveness of programs and the scope of impact. Each agency has a set of outcomes on which it focuses. Housing stability is not a success or outcome measure across all prevention-related systems in the state.

Demographics of Population

Multiple data sources identify youth at risk of experiencing housing instability or those who are actively experiencing homelessness. These data sources include:

- **Homeless student data**: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) manages and publicly posts homeless student data to their website.

- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** Community-based housing providers collect data at intake; data includes who is accessing housing-related services and where are they exiting to.

- **Cross-system data**: The Research and Data Analysis (RDA) team at DSHS identifies homelessness for youth after they exit from a system. This data is analyzed across different housing programs and DSHS's internal data portal, DCYF's InfoFamLink and juvenile rehabilitation data, and behavioral health inpatient admissions data to provide a picture of how effective state systems are at promoting and supporting the stability of housing for youth over the longer term.

- **Program-level data**: Details on who is accessing state programs, including age, race and ethnicity

Analysis of the different data sources can be found in Appendix B.

Demographic Data Available Include:

- **Race and ethnicity**: All of the data sources above capture youth and young adults' race and ethnicity.

- **Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)**: SOGI data is not consistently captured across systems for all age groups. For example, HMIS data contains partial SOGI data for youth and young adult populations and cannot be relied on for a better understanding of how many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,[6] queer and two-spirit[7] (LGBTQ2) youth are experiencing homelessness.

- **Location**: Youth experience homelessness differently based on where they live. Young people's access to services might be limited or expansive based on location or region. Housing and employment opportunities may also be limited. The data sources above can provide information on the prevalence of homelessness or show the need for preventative services based on location.

- **Disability**: OSPI data capture disability information better than other data sources. DSHS's DDA team has data on their clients, who are a much smaller population compared to all people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the state. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid data will need to be incorporated into cross-system data to understand the prevalence of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities served and those not served by state systems.

- **Age**: Data sources above capture the age of participants in provided programs.

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[6] A person whose gender does not correspond to the gender assigned at birth.
[7] It is an umbrella term used by some indigenous communities to denote the third gender.

Racial Disproportionality

BIPOC Youth Experiencing Poverty at High Rates in Washington
According to the analysis of five years of American Community Survey data included in the Poverty Reduction Workgroup's 10-year strategic plan,[8] nearly half the young people between 18-24 years in the state are low income or in poverty, with 20% of them experiencing deep poverty while an additional 9% are close to the Federal poverty level.[9] Thirty-seven percent of children and adolescents between the ages of 6-17 are experiencing poverty in Washington. The data also shows that people of color, specifically Latinx, Indigenous, and Black, experience poverty at twice the rate of white people in Washington. Higher poverty rates in communities of color are due to policies, practices and other harms that have continued to marginalize people of color by preventing the building of wealth by denying access to loans, housing opportunities, education, and employment. While the data does not break down disproportionality in the experience of poverty concerning age, we can extrapolate that youth and young adults of color disproportionately experience poverty.

People of color experience poverty at

2x

the rate of white people in Washington.

49%

of young people between 18-24 years are low income or experiencing poverty in Washington.

Poverty results from multiple structural factors and systemic shortcomings that are similar to the root causes of youth homelessness. Poverty deprives the family of physical, emotional, social, financial, mental, and structural resources to navigate family conflict and other causes of youth homelessness.

Students of Color Experience Homelessness at Higher Rates Than Their White Peers
This is evidenced in the OSPI youth homelessness rate by race and ethnicity shown below. The graphic also shows that transgender, non-binary, questioning, two-spirit youth experience homelessness at higher rates than their cisgender peers. The race and ethnicity breakdown in the graphic below is for all youth experiencing homelessness, not only unaccompanied youth.

> **GAP: Schools can play a role in primary prevention but do not have adequate resources.**
> Schools are consistently available to youth and families for resources across the state. Schools are often a place of safety and positive adult support for youth, and offer a potential avenue for prevention efforts. School social workers, counselors, and family engagement coordinators regularly support students furthest from educational justice, and school psychologists can provide critical mental or behavioral health supports. Staff in each of these roles can play a part in ensuring that youth get the supportive services that they need prior to experiencing homelessness. However, the current prototypical school funding model funds these critical staff positions far below what is necessary to eliminate opportunity gaps for our state's most vulnerable students. The Staffing Enrichment Workgroup has recommended adjustments to the prototypical funding model and OSPI has requested funding to implement these changes during the 2021-23 biennium.

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[8] Poverty Reduction Workgroup, "Reducing Poverty & Inequality in Washington State," (January 2020), https://dismantlepovertyinwa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020_Jan_21_PRWG_10_year_plan_COORDINATING_DRAFT.pdf
[9] Deep poverty is 0-49% of Federal poverty level (FPL). Poverty is 50-100% of FPL.

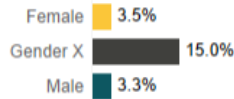# Demographics of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Washington:

Homeless	Doubled-Up	Hotels/Motels	Sheltered	Unsheltered
40,383	27,960	2,407	4,391	2,644

Select School Year
2018-19

Select Organization Name
Washington State

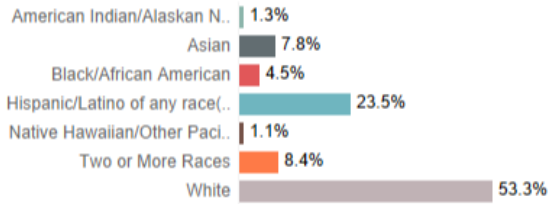**Select Enrollment Analysis Method**
Disproportionality

Gender: All Students

Female	48.3%
Gender X	0.0%
Male	51.6%

Gender: Homeless Students

Female	3.5%
Gender X	15.0%
Male	3.3%

Race/Ethnicity: All Students

American Indian/Alaskan N..	1.3%
Asian	7.8%
Black/African American	4.5%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(..	23.5%
Native Hawaiian/Other Paci..	1.1%
Two or More Races	8.4%
White	53.3%

Race/Ethnicity: Homeless Students

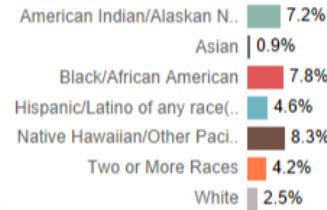|	
American Indian/Alaskan N..	7.2%
Asian	0.9%
Black/African American	7.8%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(..	4.6%
Native Hawaiian/Other Paci..	8.3%
Two or More Races	4.2%
White	2.5%

Image 6 visualizes the data from OSPI's youth homelessness dashboard by highlighting the gender, race, and ethnicity of the state's entire student population and comparing it to students experiencing homelessness.

Racial Disproportionality of BIPOC Youth Entering Systems

BIPOC youth experience child welfare and juvenile justice system involvement at higher rates than their white peers do. According to the Child Wellbeing Data Portal,[10] as of July 2020, Black or African American children were placed in out-of-home care at more than twice the rate of their white peers, as were multiracial and American Indian/Alaskan Native children.

The table below shows the rate of entry of youth for every 1,000 youth in the general population of that demographic in January 2019. The values in bold indicate when the rate is close to twice the rate of out of home placement for White youth.

Black, Native American, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian youth are removed from their homes and placed in out of home care at

2x

the rate of their white peers.

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[10] Center for Social Sector Analytics & Technology, "Child Well-being Data Portal," (2020), http://pocdata.org/

Table 2: Rate of Entry of Adolescents into Child Welfare by Age, Race and Ethnicity

Age at Removal	Race /Ethnicity	Rate of Entries
10- 14 years	African American/Black	**4.76**
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	**4.70**
	Asian	0.42
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	**4.06**
	White/Caucasian	2.02
	Multiracial	3.96
15-17 years	African American/Black	**4.19**
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.97
	Asian	0.37
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	**5.11**
	White/Caucasian	1.58
	Multiracial	**3.95**

Source: Center for Social Sector Analytics & Technology, "Child Well-being Data Portal," (2020), http://pocdata.org/

Young people of color experience publicly funded systems of care at higher rates than their white peers, and they disproportionately experience homelessness after they exit these systems. A dashboard released by RDA in July 2020 titled "Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington state"[11]shows that out of the 1,441 young people who experienced homelessness 12 months after exiting foster care, residential behavioral health treatment or the juvenile justice system in 2017, over half (52%) were BIPOC youth. Over 60% of the young people experiencing homelessness after exiting foster care and juvenile justice were BIPOC youth.

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[11] Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, "Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington State," (July 2020), https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-254.pdf

GAP: Programs and services that are currently in place to serve youth and families are not working for communities of color.
The data on disproportionality of poverty in the state, youth experiencing out of home placement and those who exit systems and experience homelessness speaks for itself. It is important to take a critical lens to existing programs and services, gather detailed programmatic data on outcomes across racial groups and by region and feedback from different communities to understand what is required to meet the needs of communities of color. Programs that are designed for able-bodied, cis-gendered, neuro-typical, White, middle-class, urban youth and families are not going to translate across intersections of race, language, culture, gender identity, class, location, neuro-diversity and historical marginalization. A targeted universalism approach, where those who are most marginalized and least served by programs, are co-designer of the services and systems will lead to better services and programs for all youth across the state.

Disability and Homelessness

Youth with disabilities are disproportionally represented in the housing unstable population. According to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), 11% of young people (ages 14-24) with disabilities experienced housing instability in 2018.[12]

According to Homeless Student Data from OSPI, students with Section 504 and those with disabilities are also disproportionately represented in the housing unstable population (See graphic on the next page).

According to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

9,286

young people (ages 14- 24) with disabilities were unstably housed in 2018

GAP: Youth who are labelled as "high functioning" autistic slip through system gaps without receiving appropriate supportive services.
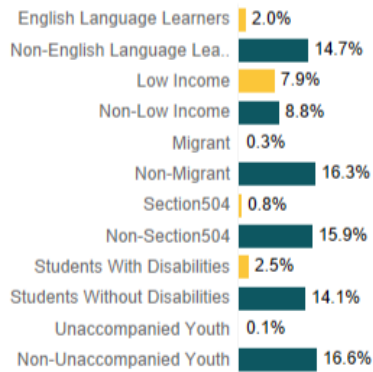Supports for families with youth who are labelled as having "high functioning" autism are limited. Many youth, especially BIPOC youth, are not diagnosed early or are misdiagnosed. For youth who are diagnosed with "high functioning" autism, they have to be eligible for Medicaid and pass the cutoff for youth services. Many Medicaid programs do not receive training or know how to work with Autistic youth and young adults. An additional challenge is identifying appropriate supports to benefit families who need assistance in managing challenging youth needs.

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[12] Department of Social and Health Services, "DVR Service Needs for Adults," (August, 2020), https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/dvr/pdf/DVR-Customer-Service-Needs-2018.pdf

Detailed Demographic Information of Students Experiencing Homelessness:

Student Group: All Students

English Language Learners	2.0%
Non-English Language Lea..	14.7%
Low Income	7.9%
Non-Low Income	8.8%
Migrant	0.3%
Non-Migrant	16.3%
Section504	0.8%
Non-Section504	15.9%
Students With Disabilities	2.5%
Students Without Disabilities	14.1%
Unaccompanied Youth	0.1%
Non-Unaccompanied Youth	16.6%

Student Group: Homeless Students

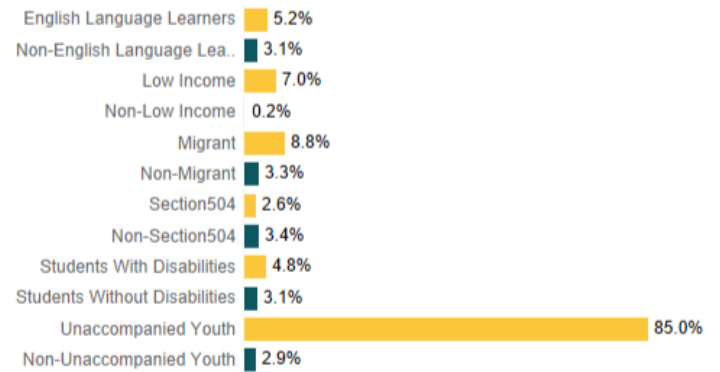|	
English Language Learners	5.2%
Non-English Language Lea..	3.1%
Low Income	7.0%
Non-Low Income	0.2%
Migrant	8.8%
Non-Migrant	3.3%
Section504	2.6%
Non-Section504	3.4%
Students With Disabilities	4.8%
Students Without Disabilities	3.1%
Unaccompanied Youth	85.0%
Non-Unaccompanied Youth	2.9%

Image 7: OSPI's Homeless Student data dashboard data from 2018 highlights the prevalence of poverty, disability, and other factors in the general population compared to youth experiencing homelessness.

Further analysis of data from the DDA and DVR, looking across homeless student data, will be required to understand how many youth and young adults who experience housing instability have intellectual or developmental disabilities and the unmet need for services for them and their families. It will also be important to breakdown the data by race and ethnicity to understand whether BIPOC youth with disabilities experience homelessness at higher rates.

GAP: Programs, services and expectations designed for able-bodied, neuro-typical youth often are not adequate or appropriate to serve youth with autism.
Shelters and transitional apartments may be inaccessible to youth and young adults with autism due to their sensory systems. For example, bright fluorescent lights or a highway outside of the window of the housing may negatively impact the young person, leading them to sleep outside, as it would be easier. Organizational materials or rules may be written in ways that would cause Autistic folks to miss important things because they are written between the lines or it is assumed to be understood as "common sense."

Another factor is that organizations are not specifically trained in how to form positive relationships with autistic people, which can create misunderstandings and force many autistic people to be unenrolled from services because of it.

Promising Programs

Promising programs were assessed based on research and input from subject matter experts, agency stakeholders, community organizations and lived experts. The team has identified various programs that focus on family support, educational attainment, substance use prevention and promotion of protective factors. While there are many interventions focused on supporting young people actively experiencing homelessness, as highlighted by researchers at Chapin Hall,[13] there is a lack of programs that focus on preventing youth and young adult homelessness.

Table 3 below shows promising programs from across Washington and the nation. Not all the programs shown below are funded by state agencies or available in Washington. The ones that are available in Washington are not consistently available across all counties. It is possible that not all promising programs to prevent youth homelessness and other negative outcomes are included below. To only view programs and services funded by state agencies, see Appendix A.

Table 3: Primordial Prevention Programs

Program	Organization	Details
123 Parent Help	Within Reach	A website with a call-in line to check if families qualify for food or health benefits. Ability to learn about available resources in their community. The program currently emphasizes resources for parents with young children.
After school teen programs	Available at museums, science centers and libraries	Available regionally. Specific programming depends on the organization and location.
WA Listens	Health Care Authority	Call in line developed to support individuals through the stress of COVID19 and uncertainty. Provides non-clinical support for people who might be stressed
Substance use and underage drinking prevention campaigns	Health Care Authority	See Appendix A for details.
21st-century learning centers[14]	Office of Academic Improvement	Programs that support after-school educational support for low-income students
Family resource navigators	Various	Navigators to help families navigate services by providing more personable and "hand-on" support
Northside Achievement Zone	Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)	The organization focuses on two-generational supports to African American families and students in the Northside of Minneapolis to ensure that students can achieve their best.

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[13] Chapin Hall, "Missed Opportunities: Evidence on Interventions for Addressing Youth Homelessness," (October 2019), https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-Review-Brief.pdf
[14] US Department of Education, "Programs," https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html

Program	Organization	Details
Love and Liberation	Funded by United Way of King County, implemented by various BIPOC organizations	Support to BIPOC organizations to support school engagement for BIPOC youth from different communities by using a positive cultural identity framework. Each organization utilizes tools that are meaningful to the youth and their specific community.
Substance Use Disorder Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Programs	Health Care Authority	Health Care Authority supports Community Wellness and Prevention Initiative (CPWI) to prevent Substance Use Disorder in adolescents in their community and promote mental health using evidence-based practices. CPWI is an evidence-based practice for coalition building and bringing evidence-based policies and programs to scale.
Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs)	Health Care Authority and Office of Superintendent of Instruction	Trained and certified Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) are placed in middle and high schools. The SAP services are a multi-tiered approach, where prevention and intervention services are provided to the entire school community (universal prevention). Group or individual interventions (selected/indicated prevention and intervention) are provided to students who are most vulnerable for, or are using, alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Table 4: Primary Prevention

Program	Organization	Details
SAFE project[15]	Cocoon House	Small group support for parents with adolescents based on the Strengthening Families Program
Strengthening Families Program[16]	Various (evidence-based program)	Family, parenting and youth life skills that youth and parents attend weekly.
Geelong Project[17]	Multi organization partnership in the Geelong area in Australia	A universal screen is done in schools to identify youth at risk of homelessness to ensure they are connected to services.
Wrap Around with Intensive Services (WiSE)	Health Care Authority	In-home intensive behavioral health support
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Various (evidence-based program)	A culturally competent and strengths-based model to support parents and youth

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[15] Cocoon House, "Project SAFE Support Group," http://www.cocoonhouse.org/prevention-calendar/2015/10/13/project-safe-support-group
[16] Strengthening Families Program, https://strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/
[17] The Geelong Project, http://www.thegeelongproject.com.au/

Program	Organization	Details
Functional Family Therapy	Various (evidence-based program)	Focused on improving family functioning and behavior change to reduce family conflict and increase hope and relationship quality with family members
Creating Lasting Family Connections	Various (evidence-based program in substance use prevention)	Program to support families to understand childhood behaviors and create a nurturing environment for their child.
Familias Unidas	Various (evidence-based program)	Designed for Hispanic families living in the US and focuses on promoting positive parenting. Programs prevent illicit drug use, antisocial behavior and risky sexual behaviors in adolescents.
Family support centers[18]	Various	School or community-based centers that focus on programming relevant to the area they are located. Programs are multigenerational and include homelessness prevention, education, employment etc. Specific call outs - Family and Youth Resource Center and South Whidbey School District Family Support Center
Graduation Reality and Dual Roles Skills (GRADS)[19]	OSPI	Program to support pregnant and parenting students by strengthening family foundation skills, providing childcare on-site and coordinating activities outside the classroom.
School-based diversion	Choose 180	Program to support youth at risk of suspension and expulsion
Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)	Various (evidence-based programs)	Helps parents develop parenting skills and decrease behavioral issues with the youth
SPORT	Prevention Plus Wellness, LLC	Single session substance use prevention program

[18] National Family Support Network, "Family Support Centers," https://www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/family-support-programs
[19] Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Graduation, Reality And Dual-Role Skills (GRADS)," https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/learning-alternatives/graduation-reality-and-dual-role-skills-grads

Table 5: Early Secondary Prevention

Program	Organization	Details
Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) model	Various	The FAPT model approaches supporting youth at risk of out of home placement by coordinating regular meetings with families, youth and supervisory staff across multiple government agencies, such as child welfare, schools, juvenile justice to supportive services are provided to prevent system involvement.
Community-Based Assessment and Treatment, Medical hub[20]	Violence Intervention Program	The LA county-based program has a comprehensive community-based assessment across multiple medical hubs to evaluate and treat child and teen abuse and provides supportive services to them and their families.
Home Builders	Various (evidence-based program)	Intensive home-based service to help families manage moderate to high family conflict
Family Crisis Intervention Services	Institute for Family Development	The goal is to resolve immediate crises in a family with a youth.
Anchor Communities Initiative	A Way Home Washington	Focuses on ensuring young people who ask for housing help receive services across four communities in the state. The Centralized Diversion Fund provides flexible funding to help young people quickly secure housing.
Dispute Resolution Centers	Various	Supporting youth and families navigating conflict.

Table 6: Later Secondary Prevention

Program	Organization	Details
Family Interventions and Restorative services	King County Juvenile Division	De-escalation program that prevents further involvement in the justice system by offering a space for overnight respite for youth arrested for domestic or family violence incidences
Community Passageways - Family Integrated Transitions (CP-FIT)	Community Passageways	This program has been adapted from the Family Integrated Transitions (FIT) model to support BIPOC youth-at-risk, currently involved or those who have had juvenile or criminal justice involvement. The program Involves family and the community.

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[20] Violence Intervention Program, "Children & Teen," https://violenceinterventionprogram.org/about-vip/our-programs/children-teen/

Program	Organization	Details
System of care/Innovation grant	Collaboration between Juvenile Rehabilitation, YouthCare and Volunteers of America funded by OHY	A pilot program that dedicates multiple beds in a youth housing organization specifically for youth exiting from Juvenile Rehabilitation ensures that they do not exit into homelessness.

Table 7: Tertiary Prevention

Program	Organization	Details
Youth Engagement team	Social Impact Center at YMCA, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children, Friend of Youth	Collaboration between a youth housing provider, legal services and mental health provider to help youth actively experiencing homelessness navigate barriers such as obtaining an ID, staying in school etc.
New Leaf project[21]	Foundations for Social Change	Direct Cash Transfer to support people experiencing homelessness
Multisystemic therapy	Various (evidence-based program)	Family and community-based intervention for juvenile offenders to decrease criminal behavior
Coordination between the school district and HMIS	Everett School District	Everett is also one of the few districts with HMIS access and can cross-reference enrollment data against HMIS to ensure students and families are served.
Rental assistance	Various	Support to youth and young adults navigating aspects of renting for the first time, including support for first and last month rent deposit or paying rent.
Master leasing	Various (including Volunteers of America, North West Youth Services and Cornerstone 253)	Master leasing allows a community organization to own the rental agreement with the landlord and sublease it to youth. This approach works well for youth because they might not have rental history, credit or have a record that might prevent them from accessing housing on the market.
Supportive housing	Various	Housing that includes case management, behavioral health support and access to adulting skills such as cooking, laundry, managing finances etc.
Host Homes	Washington Host Home Coalition	Creating housing opportunities across the state by enabling families with a spare room in their house to host a young person who needs housing.

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[21] Foundations for Social Change, "Taking Bold Action on Homelessness," (Sept. 2020), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f07a92f21d34b403c788e05/t/5f751297fcfe7968a6a957a8/1601507995038/2020_09_30_FSC_Statement_of_Impact_w_Expansion.pdf

Prevention Funding Streams

Overview

At a high level, funding streams fall into four overarching categories: federal, state, local (city or county) and private. State and local government agencies utilize a patchwork of federal and state funding for their prevention work. Only a few of the said funding streams have an emphasis on prevention at the primary level. Different funding streams have different restrictions on who can receive services and what the money can be used for. This makes it more difficult to develop any single coherent intervention to prevent youth and young adult homelessness.

1. Federal Funding

The Health Care Authority's prevention efforts are funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). Similarly, many of the programs in the primary prevention space supported by DSHS are funded federally, like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Schools' prevention funding streams also come from the federal level. Programs such as McKinney-Vento (MV) provide support to youth actively experiencing housing instability and are also enrolled in public school. One-off or program-specific funding is also available from federal sources; for example, libraries access federal funds for specific programs.

> **GAP: Funding and policies to address homelessness are focused on tertiary prevention causing a lack of services and supports for caregivers and youth in early stages of crisis.**
> Majority of funding and policies to address homelessness are focused on tertiary prevention, intervening once someone is actively experiencing homelessness. There are few resources and programs in the housing and homelessness system that address prevention at early states along the prevention continuum.
>
> Parents and caregivers need support to understand the adolescence period of development and how to effectively assist and support young people through it. For example, community-level programs focused on LGBTQ2 parenting and gender transitions help families understand what it means when their children "come out" to them. Parent hotlines can provide caregivers with emotional support and help problem solving challenges that arise in their relationship with their youth. Culturally appropriate programs for youth and families of color help navigate the impacts of racism and culturally specific aspects of transitioning to adulthood could prevent housing instability.

The Family First Prevention Services Act will provide IV-E funding for prevention services for children or youth who are candidates for foster care, pregnant or parenting youth in foster care, and the parents or kin caregivers of those children and youth.[22] Family Reconciliation Services is included in the department's first cohort in the federal implementation plan.

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[22] Administration for Children & Families, "Title IV-E Prevention Program," https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/title-iv-e-prevention-program

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds a wide range of homelessness and housing programs that provide tertiary prevention once individuals are actively experiencing homelessness. The Family and Youth Services Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds Runaway and Homeless Youth programs, such as outreach, shelter, transitional housing, and family violence prevention programs.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funding provides about $1 million to DCYF per year to pay for all the prevention work. While this pool was traditionally used specifically to prevent early childhood abuse and neglect, the funding was expanded to include the adolescent age group.

2. State Funding

Many adolescent-related prevention programs are supported by state-level funding, such as Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) and the Homeless Student Stability Program (HSSP). OHY programs for outreach, shelter, and housing are funded primarily through the state.

3. Local Funding

Libraries are examples of a system funded by local funding streams, such as city budgets, resourced through property taxes. Local governments at city and county levels have different revenue and funding sources that may be used to address youth homelessness. The available funding and the approved program expenditures vary in each municipality. For example, King County supports youth homelessness initiatives through the Best Start for Kids funding.[23] Best Start for Kids, as a funding stream, does not exist in any other counties. Therefore, other counties do not have access to this funding stream to support youth homelessness prevention and intervention initiatives.

4. Private Funding

Community organizations rely on a patchwork of state, local and private funds to support the programs that youth and families rely on for support when in crisis. Depending on state, federal and private funder priorities, the programs families find most helpful may not be funded to the level necessary to make an impact. In conversations with community-based organizations across Washington, the message was consistent. The number one priority, repeatedly emphasized, was to provide support for basic family needs such as food, employment, rent and shelter to ensure youth in the family do not experience housing instability.

> **GAP: Prevention lacks flexible and integrated funding streams.**
> As indicated earlier, financial support for prevention is siloed based on the requirements of the funding stream; for example, substance use prevention dollars can only be used for prevention of substance use. The funding stream also dictates where on the prevention continuum state agencies focus their prevention efforts. A narrow focus of the prevention funding prohibits collaboration across agencies creating siloed programs and services that communities have to navigate. This siloed approach to funding does not allow for a cohesive prevention approach. Flexible and integrated funding streams can allow for a cohesive approach to prevention of youth homelessness by looking across the prevention continuum.

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23 King County, https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/initiatives/best-starts-for-kids.aspx

Recommendations and Next Steps

Establish a coordinating body focused on the prevention of unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness.

The coordinating body should focus on preventing youth homelessness, unnecessary involvement in child welfare or juvenile justice system and other negative outcomes to ensure that agencies are looking holistically at a two-generational or multigenerational approach to supporting youth and their families. Lived experts and those disproportionately impacted by homelessness and system involvement should be a part of the coordinating body alongside legislators, practitioners and agency stakeholders. Lived experts should be paid for their time.

Those directly impacted by the programs, policies, and state and local government decisions are some of our best subject matter experts. Compensation is a key factor in ensuring that people with lived experience receive equitable representation. Yet state laws prohibit compensation for members of part-time boards and commissions who serve an advisory, coordinating, or planning function. It is recommended that RCW 43.03.220 be amended to allow compensation for lived expert members to participate in the coordinating body. Compensating lived experts for their time will allow for an inclusive, equitable approach to designing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to preventing youth homelessness.

The cross-system coordinating body should work to reduce racial disparities in youth homelessness, ensure coordination of funding, pilot innovative approaches and work together to implement and scale programs and services design with and by lived experts. A cross-system coordinating body can address many of the system gaps identified in this report.

Some of the activities can include:

- Coordinate across programs, share learnings and find opportunities to collaborate to eliminate silos across prevention programs and services for families and youth.

- Identify pathways to implement prevention of youth homelessness strategy designed by lived experts with input from cross-system agency stakeholders.

- Coordinate across silos to make recommendations to the Governor and state legislature on flexible funding to support primordial and primary prevention of youth homelessness work. The group can also leverage its existing funding sources to collaborate to develop and implement innovative solutions to support youth and families.

- Ensure that youth with autism, youth with I/DD or mental illness do not slip through the gaps in programs and supportive services that systems offer.

- Work towards ensuring services are available consistently to all families across Washington's whole prevention continuum. Ensure that families do not have to intersect with the formal systems (juvenile justice or foster care) to get help.

A cross-system coordinating body on prevention can tackle structural factors that lead youth to experience homelessness by developing and implementing anti-racist and LGBTQ2 affirming policies and practices.

Build the data infrastructure to measure the prevalence of youth and young adult homelessness.

The Research and Data Analysis (RDA) team at the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) should:

○ Collaborate with the Office of Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) to develop a youth homelessness database with data sharing between OSPI and RDA to ensure a comprehensive youth homelessness measure.

○ Conduct data analysis to estimate the prevalence of youth and young adult housing instability, emphasizing youth race/ethnicity, disability, and location to understand statewide needs and current access to resources.

- Include OSPI's student homelessness data
- Include juvenile court information
- Include data from Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Healthy Youth Survey

○ Analyze data to understand how many youth and young adults who experience housing instability have intellectual or developmental disabilities and the unmet service needs for them and their families by including DDA, DVR, and other data sources.

Additionally, a housing instability assessment should be included in programs that serve young people, such as Family Reconciliation Services and juvenile court programs that support "Becca Bill" petitions:[24]

○ This includes understanding prior housing conditions and post-intervention housing conditions.

○ Evaluate a young person's stability 6 to 12 months after services are delivered to understand whether the service was effective.

Redesign the Family Reconciliation Service to be a community-based service for youth and families focused on primary prevention.

Currently, Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) provided by DCYF is one of the only preventative services available to adolescents and families at the state level. It requires youth and families to access services by calling the CPS intake line and agree to voluntary services. This inherently involves the family in the child welfare system. In many cases, youth and families are referred through the court system for FRS services because they have an At-Risk Youth or Child in Need of Services petition filed. In 2018, about 3,700 youth were referred for FRS services.[25] This represents a small number of youth who need supportive services across the state to ensure they do not experience housing instability or other negative outcomes. It is important to redesign the FRS process.

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[24] Petitions filed under RCW 28A.225.030, also known as "Becca Bill."
[25] InfoFamLink data

Moving FRS program implementation and program ownership out of the Child Welfare Division in DCYF to Adolescent Programs in DCYF, emphasizing making it a community-based service, will facilitate collaboration with communities, genuine prevention before any systems involvement, and service flexibility. Concentrated efforts and future funding will be required to redesign the service to ensure that FRS services meet youth and families' needs with a strong racial equity lens. It will be important to:

○ Find pathways other than juvenile courts and CPS intake line to access services.

○ Ensure that services are consistently and reliably available across the state.

○ Ensure culturally relevant programming is incorporated so that BIPOC youth and families are supported.

○ Ensure that services provided through FRS are also trauma-informed and healing centered.

○ Gather data on disability, service utilization and measure outcomes in the longer term, including educational attainment and housing stability.

○ Gather feedback on the appropriateness of service provided

○ Iterate on end-to-end service delivery to ensure it continues to meet all youth and families' needs anywhere in the state.

Next Steps

As a clear next step, OHY will collaborate with community organizations Innovation Human Trafficking Collaborative and Communities of Color Coalition to co-design a statewide strategy for prevention with BIPOC youth lived experts of homelessness and caregivers.

Black, Indigenous and youth of color[26], youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD)[27] and LGBTQ2 youth[28] are disproportionately represented in the unstable housing population across the US and Washington. BIPOC youth and those with I/DD use homelessness services such as shelters less than their white and neurotypical peers. To ensure that we develop policies, services, and programs that serve all youth, especially those disproportionally represented in the homeless population, it is important to ensure that those disproportionately represented in the unstable housing population can inform new policies, services and system changes. OHY continues to engage the youth advisory board (Y4Y[29]) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP), representing youth lived experts from the rural most counties of the state and youth from the Mockingbird Society for our work at large.

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[26] Voices of Youth Count, "Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America," https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/#finding-five

[27] The Bronfebrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University, Psychology Today, (Sept. 2020), https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evidence-based-living/202009/what-we-know-about-homelessness-and-intellectual-disability?eml

[28] Voices of Youth Count, "Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America," https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/

[29] Youth 4 Youth

Developing a steering committee made up of youth and families disproportionately impacted by homelessness to guide the prevention work will ensure that solutions do not leave out youth who are most marginalized.

Timelines and Phases of Work

July - December 2020	December 2020 - May 2021	May 2021 - July 2021	August 2021
•Understanding root causes •Understanding state systems •Preliminary report	•Co-design with lived experts disproportionately impacted by homelessness	•Gather feedback from lived experts, community and advocacy organizations	•Final strategic plan on prevention of youth homelessness

Image 7: Highlights the expected phases of the work required to develop a robust draft strategic plan to prevent youth homelessness.

Steering Committee of Lived Experts

In developing policy and system recommendations for preventing youth homelessness, it is important to understand and analyze the intersectionality of individual, structural and systemic issues that affect young people. As highlighted previously, young people experience housing instability due to a complex set of reasons. Root causes of youth homelessness include structural issues such as poverty, policies affecting those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, historic trauma due to on-going settler colonialism, structural racism in city and county housing policies. The team will build on the work done by the Poverty Reduction Work Group[30] and the 10-year strategic plan to reduce poverty and inequality[31]. These root causes result in individual or interpersonal issues such as adverse childhood trauma, mental illness and family conflict due to intellectual and developmental disabilities placing youth and their families at risk of housing instability. While the root causes of housing instability might be the same for white youth and BIPOC youth, it is important to understand how race, ethnicity and marginalization impact young people, their families and communities. By ensuring steering committee members represent different ethnic minorities, geographical differences and have lived experience of one or more of the root causes of housing instability, we can ensure that solutions to prevent youth homelessness address the needs of historically marginalized communities and all youth experiencing housing instability.

OHY engages youth lived experts of homelessness in policy, program and system-level decision making. We work closely with youth advocacy organizations such as the Mockingbird society to ensure that young people design the systems that serve them. OHY also supports the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) youth advisory board, Youth 4 Youth (Y4Y), representing the state's most rural counties. However, through the course of OHY's work, the team has identified that BIPOC youth continue to be a group that OHY has not had the opportunity to hear from directly. Therefore, the steering committee will be focused on gathering the voices of youth and families of color.

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[30] Poverty Reduction Work Group, "About the Work Group," https://dismantlepovertyinwa.com/about-the-work-group/
[31] Poverty Reduction Work Group, "Blueprint for a Just & Equitable Future: The 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty in Washington," https://dismantlepovertyinwa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final10yearPlan.pdf

Steering Committee Composition

Race, Ethnicity, Age and Identity Factors
The OHY intends for the steering committee to be made up of:

- 90% of people who identify as people of color (with priority given to Black, native, Latinx and Pacific Islander communities)
- 60% of those who have lived experience of homelessness when they were between the ages of 12 to 24 (youth committee members can be between the ages of 18 to 30)
- 40% of those who identify as parents or caregivers who have had a child who experienced housing instability or experience with one of the factors in section 2c
- At least 25% of the committee consisting of youth experts with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and autism; and those who identify as caregivers for youth with I/DD and autism
- At least 25% of the committee consisting of LGBTQ2 youth, with an emphasis on trans or gender non-binary youth, and caregivers who identify that they have cared for LGBTQ2 youth

Geographic Mix
Steering committee members will represent urban and rural areas with a mix of eastern and western parts of the state.

Other Factors
Caregiver members will have supported youth with one or more of these experiences while a youth lived expert will have direct experience with one or more of these root causes (these factors are included to ensure diversity of voices driving the committee):

- Severe mental illness
- Child protective services involvement
- Family conflict due to gender identity or sexual orientation
- Substance use disorder
- Truancy
- Poverty
- Family homelessness
- Involvement with the justice system, including county courts

Development of Final Strategic Plan

In addition to ensuring the steering committee identifies and directs the strategy to prevent youth homelessness in the state of Washington, the team will ensure lived experts outside of the steering committee, community-based and advocacy organizations, and state agencies are consulted to provide input and feedback on the plan.

The plan will be submitted to the Legislature on Aug. 31, 2021.

Appendix A: Prevention Programs at the State Level

Agencies at the state level implement different prevention programs in different ways. Each state agency defines prevention differently and is looking at preventing different youth-related behaviors or outcomes. This appendix lists prevention-related programs at the state level, funded and implemented by different state agencies. This list is not exhaustive.

Primordial Prevention

Education and information shared with the broad population of youth and families across the state. These include marketing campaigns, parent and youth learning opportunities.

Developmental Disability Administration (DDA)

- Partnership with Informing Families to provide education and information to families and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

The education system plays an important role in ensuring youth are connected to their community, learn various skills and develop self-confidence.

- HIV/AIDS prevention education
- Sexual health education
- Health and physical education
- School Social Workers - Some school districts have mental health workers to support youth.

Health Care Authority (HCA)

- Not a Moment Wasted (College Students Substance Use Disorder Prevention)
- Start Talking Now (Underage drinking prevention)
- Starts with One (Opioid Use Disorder Prevention)
- Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI): CPWI coalitions implement evidence-based, research-based and promising programs such as Creating Lasting Connections, Family Unidas and SPORT.[32] CPWIs work across the prevention continuum.
- Community-Based Organization (CBO): CBOs bring evidence-based, research-based and promising programming to their communities. Some statewide organizations might implement programs across their chapters for adolescents. CBOs work across the continuum.
- Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) - HCA and OSPI partner through CPWIs to provide SAP support. Trained and certified Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) in middle and high schools. The SAP services are a multi-tiered approach, where prevention and intervention services are provided to the entire school community (universal prevention). Group or individual interventions (selected/indicated prevention and intervention) are provided to students who are most vulnerable for, or are using, alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

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[32] Substance use disorder prevention evidence based programs utilized by HCA are documented here: https://www.theathenaforum.org/

Community and Technical Colleges
- Parenting education programs

Libraries
- Story times
- Teen advisory boards
- Teen volunteer programs
- Adulting skills programs
- Parenting education programs

Primary Prevention
Primary prevention consists of programs and services set up specifically to support families, youth and communities in crises.

Economic Services Agency (ESA)
Programs offered through ESA can be seen as two-generational approaches. They support parents to navigate life circumstances through temporary cash and food assistance in addition to employment supports. According to DSHS's website, DSHS funds the following:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): TANF provides temporary cash for families in need.
- Washington's WorkFirst program: a program to assist recipients of TANF in meeting their goals and providing well-being for their families
- Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) referral: Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) referral program provides access to essential needs items and potential rental assistance for low-income people who cannot work for at least 90 days due to a physical and/or mental incapacity. Applicable to those who are 18 years or older.
- Basic Food: Basic Food is the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is called Basic Food in Washington and helps people with low incomes make ends meet by providing monthly food benefits.

Developmental Disability Administration (DDA)
- Community First Choice Personal Care provides long-term supportive care in a home setting and is tailored to each individual to support them in remaining in their home.
- Respite services provide short-term intermittent relief for caregivers.
- Specialized Habilitation services assist clients in learning or maintaining skills in the categories of self-empowerment, safety awareness, self-advocacy, interpersonal effectiveness, effective social communication, appropriate coping strategies for everyday life changes, managing daily tasks or adaptive skills.
- Community engagement services are services designed to increase a waiver participant's connection to and engagement in formal and informal community supports.

Health Care Authority (HCA)
According to HCA's website, HCA provides funding for the following efforts:

- Tribal Prevention and Wellness Programs: Innovative, culturally relevant evidence-based programming implemented by Tribes to prevent adolescent use of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs

- **Wrap-Around Intensive Services (WiSE)**: WiSE model provides comprehensive behavioral health services and support to eligible Medicaid-funded children and youth in Washington.
- **Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs)**
- **Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative** (CPWI)

Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)
- Street Outreach Services (includes outreach at libraries, LGBTQ2 centers to connect young people with services)

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)
- **Nurse-family Partnership**: while the focus is on pregnant mothers and supporting their transition with a young child, this program also supports pregnant teens.
- Other primary prevention programs at DCYF focus on preventing child abuse and neglect, but these programs currently do not focus on adolescents.[33]

Early Secondary Prevention

DCYF
- **The Office of Juvenile Justice** (OJJ) at DCYF provides funding to CBOs implementing programs that prevent youth from becoming formally involved in the juvenile justice system, including programs at the referral and filing stages, so that youth are diverted from formal involvement in the juvenile justice system.

DDA
- Case management helps clients eligible for paid services to gain needed medical, social, educational and other services.

OHY
- Diversion: financial assistance to divert a young person from the homeless response system

Later Secondary Prevention

DCYF
- **The Office of Juvenile Justice** (OJJ) at DCYF develops and implements programs that prevent youth at risk of going deeper into the juvenile justice system from doing so through a formal diversion process.
- **Family Reconciliation Services (FRS)** is a voluntary program serving youth (12-17 years) in conflict with their families or those who have an At-Risk Youth (ARY), Child In Need of Services (CHINS) or Truancy petition filed. FRS services are meant to be short-term intervention services to resolve family crises and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement. The intervention services provided are chosen from different evidence-based practices such as Triple P, Functional Family Therapy Home Builders; programs highlighted in the promising programs section.
- **Family Voluntary Services** responds to families who need services following a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation.

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[33] Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families, "Prevention," https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/practice-improvement/ffpsa/prevention

- Family Assessment Response (FAR) is a CPS alternative response to investigating a screened-in allegation of child abuse or neglect. FAR focuses on child safety and the integrity and preservation of the family when lower-risk child maltreatment allegations have been screened-in for intervention.

Libraries
- Libraries can conduct outreach to juvenile detention centers located in a library service area and schools and community teen centers.

OHY
- Crisis Residential Centers: Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services provided in semi-secure and secure facilities for youth ages 12 through 17 who are in conflict with their families, have run away from home, or whose health and safety are at risk
- HOPE Centers: Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for street youth under 18
- System of care grants are provided to state systems of care to test, and pilot programs and practices that ensure youth exiting their systems do not experience housing instability.

Tertiary Prevention

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- McKinney Vento Program ensures immediate enrollment, educational stability, and school-based supports for youth experiencing homelessness who are eligible to attend public school/preschool. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states to support district programs that serve homeless students.
- The OSPI Homeless Student Stability education Program (HSSP) awards state-funded competitive grants to increase school districts' capacity to identify and provide support for students experiencing homelessness. Grant applications receive greater weight if they specifically address opportunity gaps for students of color experiencing homelessness, additional supports for unaccompanied youth, and partnerships with CBOs.

OHY
- Street Outreach Services engage youth who might be currently involved in the juvenile justice system
- Diversion funds can be used for young people who are actively experiencing housing instability and need cash assistance to access housing
- Housing youth and young adults include specific housing for youth exiting from systems, including young adult housing program, independent youth housing program
- Young Adult Shelter: Emergency, temporary shelter, assessment, referrals and permanency planning services for young adults ages 18 through 24

HCA
- Substance use disorder prevention
- Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs)
- Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI)

DDA
- Stabilization services assist a person experiencing a crisis and can be delivered out of home in a diversion bed setting or as an hourly service as specialized habilitation or staff or family consultation.

DCYF

- Juvenile Rehabilitation has housing navigation managers to help young people exiting the system obtain access to housing, employment and other resources.

Appendix B: Data Sources

This section provides more details on the data sources available to identify the demographics of youth experiencing homelessness.

Homeless Student Data

Homeless student data, collected by school districts and compiled by OSPI, provides an estimate of the need for housing services for families with youth across the state. The data are organized across school districts and counties and break down housing instability from pre-k to 12th grade. Housing instability is further classified based on the family's housing type, such as "doubled-up," sheltered and unsheltered. The data also show how many youths with disabilities are experiencing homelessness and how many students are homeless without an adult.

Homeless Management Information System

Analysis of the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) provides data on youth and young adults actively experiencing housing instability and accessing housing or related services in the community. Data is only collected once a young person or a household with a young person interacts with the state's homeless response system.

The data captures race, ethnicity, location and age. Gender identity and sexual orientation data are not consistently captured for youth and young adults. While HMIS provides a starting point to understand housing instability for the 12-24 years age group, it is limited to individuals who have or are currently accessing services. Youth and young adults might be doubled up with family or strangers, in need of housing and related services and may never come in contact with housing-related organizations. It is difficult to predict the prevalence of youth homelessness in the state with the current data access and information.

Around 3,700 youth under 18 accessed HMIS housing resources in 2019. HMIS data also shows that around 8,000 households with young adults (18-24 years), most of whom are unaccompanied, accessed housing resources in 2019. While this number indicates the need, it might be a gross underestimate of the actual number of young adults experiencing housing instability in the state. Further analysis of HMIS exit, LGBTQ2 and race and ethnicity data broken down by region and age group will be required to understand how effectively the current homelessness response systems serve marginalized youth and young adults.

Student homelessness data[34] that highlights homelessness by school district is broken down by family homelessness and unaccompanied homelessness. While the information is accessible through OSPI's website, the lack of integration between OSPI's data and RDA's data prevents identification of the true prevalence of unaccompanied youth homelessness by region, race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Cross-system Data

Cross-system data published by RDA in July 2020 looked at homelessness among youth exiting systems of care in Washington.[35] The "homeless" data is restricted to literal homelessness and does not include young

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[34] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "UPDATE: Homeless Students," (2019), https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/homelessed/pubdocs/2019-01-update-homeless-students-data.pdf
[35] Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, "Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington State," (July 2020), https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-254.pdf

people who might be "doubled up," "couch surfing," and those who have not actively intersected with the homeless response system or received some form of state food or cash assistance. According to RDA, information on system involvement is analyzed from:

> "*Information on inpatient services, homelessness, and incarceration records are based on information from the Integrated Client Database (ICDB). The ICDB combines measures derived from the following administrative systems, among others: ProviderOne (medical claims, diagnoses, and behavioral health inpatient admissions), FamLink (foster care), ACT (juvenile rehabilitation institutions and community facilities), the Behavioral Health Data System (behavioral health inpatient admissions), the Automated Client Eligibility System (economic services and homelessness), and the Homeless Management Information System (housing services and homelessness).*"

The data shows that about 1,500 young people experience homelessness after exiting residential behavioral health, foster care, and the state's criminal justice systems. Sixty-eight percent of the young people experiencing homelessness exited from residential behavioral health systems. The updated dashboard from RDA replaces previous dashboards and includes new data, such as homelessness by county and underlying needs of youth who exited systems. For example, 64% of young people who experienced homelessness after exit had one or more indication of co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder compared to 50% of those who were not homeless.

To learn more about recommendations to prevent youth exiting systems of care from experiencing homelessness, refer to the Department of Commerce report in Jan. 2020, Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Systems of Care.

Program-level Data

The team has identified other state-level programs that could indicate a young person's current or future housing needs. These state-level programs include:

O **Family Reconciliation Services (FRS):** Families actively trying to access FRS could indicate a family's need to navigate issues with their adolescent. Housing stability is not tracked before or after FRS-related services are delivered. To understand the programs' impact and effectiveness under FRS, it will be important to track housing stability before and after receiving services.

O **"Becca Bill" petitions:**

- At-risk youth petition
- Child in need of services
- Truancy petition

Unfortunately, juvenile county courts do not track housing instability before interaction with the juvenile justice system or after. Data analysis across the courts, homeless response and DSHS systems will be required to understand how effective these programs are at predicting housing instability and supporting longer-term housing stability. Connecting school, county juvenile justice data systems with that of RDA will enable a deeper understanding of the demographics of youth involved in housing stability. Work is in progress to create a data agreement between the Administrative Office of the Courts and DSHS's RDA team to ensure a better estimate of housing instability for young people in the state can be developed to focus on understanding disproportionality.