



Scaling Equitable Solutions For Youth Homelessness Prevention in Washington State

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & DIVERSION FUND
FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT - JANUARY 2025

Elisha Pritchett
Kiki Serantes
Liz Harding Chao, MPA

Cover Art By:
Cristina "Pink" Varela

Authored For:



NorthStar
ADVOCATES

Authored By:



Generously Funded By:



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Jim Theofelis, NorthStar Advocates
Sarah Spier, NorthStar Advocates
Erandi Flores, System Change Partners
Leeze Castro, System Change Partners
Vishesh Jain, MS, System Change Partners
Karen Reinstein, Ren Design Studio

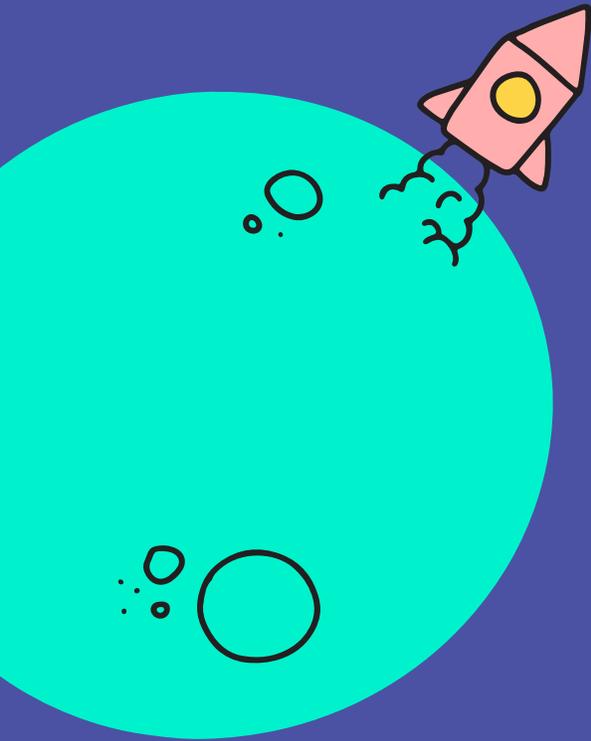
The quotes throughout the report are from HPDF Fiscal Administrators and young people with lived expertise from the NorthStar Advocates (NSA) Youth Advisory Council who participated in a focus group facilitated by System Change Partners. NSA young people provided powerful perspectives about barriers in traditional homelessness programs that are alleviated by programs such as HPDF. Young people with lived expertise also designed and co-facilitated qualitative data collection efforts. Examples of HPDF utilization are used, but all client names have been changed.

Table of Contents

- 1** The Homelessness Prevention & Diversion Fund is an Important Tool in Washington’s Strategy to End Youth Homelessness
- 1** Scaling An Equitable Housing Solution Across Washington State
- 2** Flexible Funds Drive Creative Solutions
- 3** HPDF Builds Lasting Stability For Youth and Young Adults
- 3** HPDF Remains a Crucial Prevention Resource
- 5** Providing Community-Wide Wrap-Around Support
- 6** HPDF is a Quick and Cost-Effective Path to Stable Housing
- 7** Top Funding Uses
- 8** HPDF Provides Critical Resources Amid Eviction Relief Rollbacks
- 10** HPDF Continues Building on Success of Previous Years
- 12** When Young People Take the Wheel: Creative Solutions in Action
- 13** HPDF Drives Equity in Youth Homelessness Response
- 21** Recommendations



List of Figures



- 1** **FIGURE 1** Households Served by the HPDF by County, 2023-2024
- 3** **FIGURE 2** Housing Retention Rates of Young People Served by the HPDF, 2023-24
- 4** **FIGURE 3** Young People at Risk of Homelessness or Unsafely Doubled Up/Couchsurfing Served by the HPDF, 2023-24
- 5** **FIGURE 4** Number of Providers Trained Across Counties, 2023-2024
- 7** **FIGURE 5** Top Funding Uses (May 2023 to May 2024)
- 8** **FIGURE 6** HPDF Average Costs of Rental Assistance/Arrears, 2021-24
- 10** **FIGURE 7** Households Served by the HPDF, 2021-24
- 11** **FIGURE 8** Fund Types Requested, 2021-2024
- 12** **FIGURE 9** Creative Ways the HPDF was Used in 2024
- 13** **FIGURE 10** HPDF Housing Stability Rates at 3, 6, and 12 Months by Race, 2023-24
- 14** **FIGURE 11** Age Groups and Living Situations of Minors Served,
- 15** **FIGURE 12** Racial Disproportionality in Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in WA
- 17** **FIGURE 13** Comparison of Homeless System Access Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2022



18 **FIGURE 14** Sexual Orientation of Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24

19 **FIGURE 15** Gender Identity of Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24

20 **FIGURE 16** Race/Ethnicities of Pregnant/Parenting Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24

The Homelessness Prevention & Diversion Fund is an Important Tool in Washington's Strategy to End Youth Homelessness

The Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF) launched in 2020, bringing flexible funding specifically for youth and young adults to four Washington (WA) counties to address immediate housing crises. The program was made possible through a public-private partnership that provided Yakima, Walla Walla, Spokane, and Pierce Counties \$1.5 million biannually in public funding and \$50,000 in private dollars. Since 2020, the HPDF's reach has more than doubled, and the program now operates in ten counties with additional private investments of \$500,000. Through legislative advocacy, the HPDF's public funding pool increased to \$5 million bi-annually in 2023. **The HPDF has now served over 1,704 households across WA, demonstrating its impact in both urban and rural communities.**

The HPDF **was the first multi-community centralized diversion fund for both youth and young adults (YYA) in WA**, based off a model created by AfricaTown and supported by Building Changes.¹ The HPDF was originally created as a tool for A Way Home Washington's Anchor Community Initiative to address system level gaps in YYA services. The centralized diversion model is a person-centered and strengths-based approach that assists individuals or households in quickly securing housing outside of the homeless response system. Together, the young person and trained provider tailor strategies that lead to safe and stable housing, coupled with one-time financial assistance when needed. **As a "centralized" fund, the money is held at the community level - allowing for broad access creating a "no wrong door," and inherently more equitable, framework.**

Findings:

- **611** households were served between May 2023 - May 2024.
- HPDF is a one-time, short-term resource that is leading to long-term stability: **93% of young people who accessed the fund stayed stably housed one year later.**²
- The centralized approach, program flexibility, and immediacy of fund availability are leading to **equitable housing outcomes.**
- **59%** of households served identified as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
- **Over 1 in 5** households were Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer/Questioning and other sexual orientations (LGBQ+).
- **1 in 10** households were **gender-expansive.**
- **38%** of households were **pregnant and/or parenting.**
- **20%** of households had a **disability.**
- HPDF remains **cost-effective** compared to alternative housing programs, with requests **averaging \$2,659 per household**, despite rising inflation and rent costs.

¹ Learn more about AfricaTown's Centralized Diversion Fund in King County [here](#).

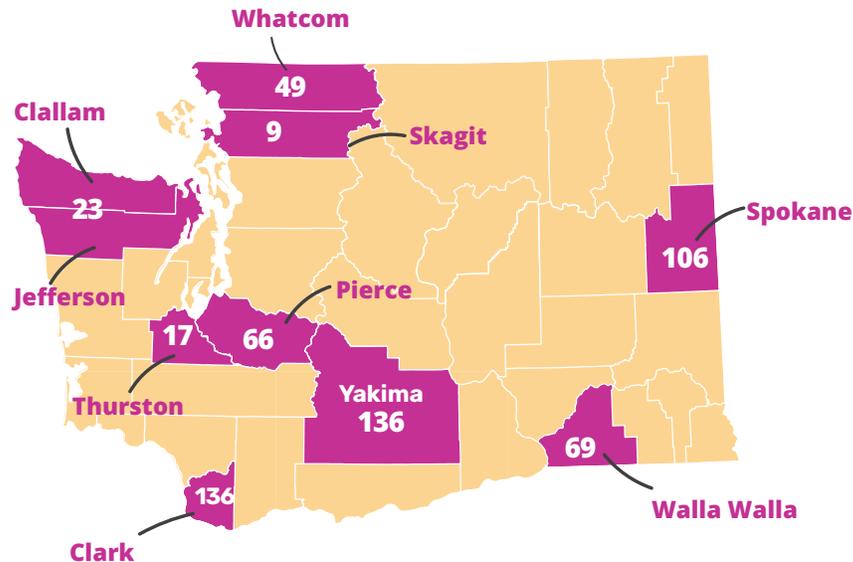
² Calculated only for young people for which exit data is available, and by determining if they entered into the homelessness system in their county's Homelessness Management Information System within the time period.

Scaling An Equitable Housing Solution Across Washington State

Since launching in 2020, the Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF, previously known as the Centralized Diversion Fund) has shifted the culture around flexible funds and transformed the way Washington State (WA) addresses unaccompanied youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness. The HPDF was WA's first (and likely the first in the nation) multi-community flexible fund program that serves young people aged 12-24 who are doubled up/couchsurfing or unstably housed, at risk of homelessness, and unsheltered or living in a place unfit for human habitation. 2024 marked a significant milestone for HPDF as the program took a major step forward in scaling its impact across the state.

Between May 2023 and May 2024, **HPDF served 611 households, a significant increase of 54% from the 397 households served last reporting period.** Of the 611 households served, 59% were young people of color. Since HPDF's inception, the fund has housed over 1,704 households. The growth in the number of young people served reflects the HPDF's ability as a program model to scale effectively in diverse regions of WA.

FIGURE 1 Households Served by the HPDF by County, 2023-2024



What began as a pilot in four communities - Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima - has grown into a statewide effort, now operating in ten counties. **In 2023, Clark County launched HPDF, and in 2024, HPDF expanded further to Clallam-Jefferson, Whatcom, Thurston and Skagit.** HPDF's expansion was made possible by the dedication and support of community partners and the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), who advocated for and secured a 400% increase in public funding (\$500,000 annually to \$2.5 million annually). While community ramp-up takes time, HPDF's expanded reach made a significant impact in 2024.

Flexible Funds Drive Creative Solutions

The HPDF was the first centralized diversion fund in WA to support both unaccompanied youth and young adults (aged 12-24), while also broadening the definition of homelessness to match the McKinney-Vento definition, which **includes youth at risk of losing housing or living in unsafe/unstable situations or doubled-up/couch-surfing**. Housing instability takes on many forms and the HPDF allows communities to meet young people where they are – whether they're couch-surfing, facing eviction, or in other precarious situations.

The HPDF's innovative model emphasizes **community-wide collaboration**. The centralized model places a single pot of funds with a fiscal administrator in a community while training a broad network of providers from across sectors to access the funds on behalf of young people. The **"no wrong door" approach** ensures that young people can get help from the people and places they already know and trust, without having to navigate the traditional homeless system. By decentralizing the funds while centralizing administration, unnecessary barriers like wait times are reduced, and young people avoid being bounced around by several referrals.

When communities have the resources to respond to young people's direct needs quickly, they save time and energy. Instead of expecting young people to fit into rigid eligibility boxes, the HPDF allows communities to respond with tailored solutions depending on young people's situation. The HPDF model **not only prevents homelessness before it starts but also fosters long-term stability**, proving the freedom to explore and develop creative solutions is essential in ending youth homelessness equitably and sustainably.

The HPDF is designed so that a community can move **quickly and creatively** to meet young people's needs. Successful solutions are those that exist **outside the traditional homeless response system** and can be **put into action within thirty days to provide at least three months of stable housing**. HPDF's low-barrier approach ensures that young people can access resources quickly, **within seventy-two hours**. By combining immediate financial assistance with a strengths-based youth-led process, young people are kept from entering the emergency shelter system or experiencing street homelessness, preventing trauma and exposure to harmful environments.

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HPDF is the most flexible, unique way to meet young people's needs more than any other program I've ever encountered in the ten years that I've been working in human services. Needing to fit everyone into very specific criteria has always been a barrier, no matter what type of help you're trying to give someone.

Chris Hannon, Youth Services Manager, Olympic Community Action Programs, Jefferson & Clallam Counties

HPDF Builds Lasting Stability For Youth and Young Adults

Nearly all young people served by the HPDF (for which exit data is available) stayed housed: Of the 611 households served last year, there is exit data for 63% of households.³ Among exited households, 94% were successfully diverted,⁴ with 95% of successfully diverted youth still housed three months later.

The overall project goal for the HPDF is that at least 75% of all young people served stay housed within three months after successfully being diverted. A successful diversion includes both temporary and permanent housing placements lasting at least 3 months. Successful diversions also include placements where the young person is living either independently or with friends and family, encouraging creativity and intentionality when they determine what housing solution will work best for their unique situation.⁵

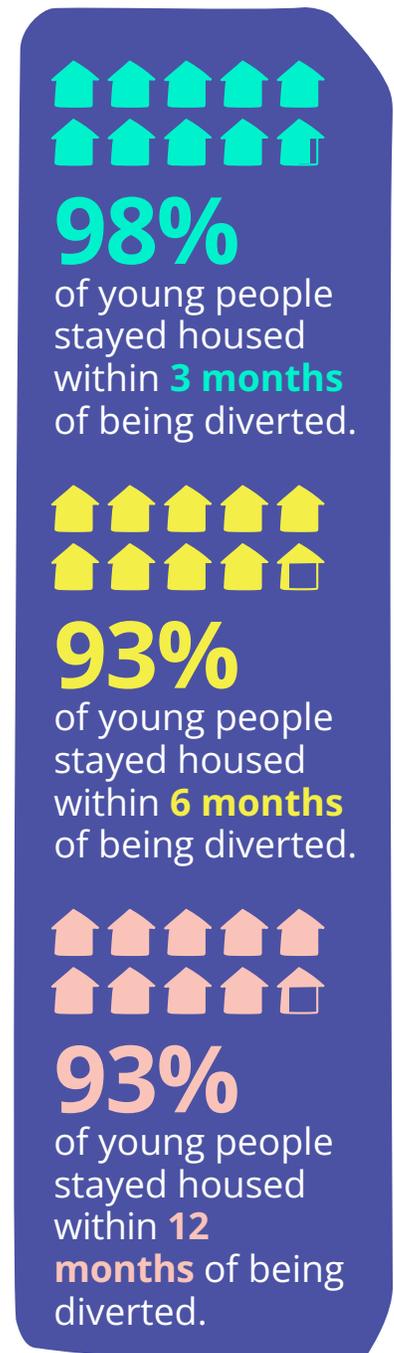
HPDF Remains a Crucial Prevention Resource

The HPDF is a cornerstone of prevention efforts with its expansive, McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, offering young people a lifeline before they fall into homelessness. In 2024,⁶ 82% of households served were either at risk of losing housing or doubled up/couch-surfing, an increase of 11 percentage points from last year, with a majority of those being young people of color, making up 59%. Notably, the number of young people at imminent risk of losing their housing has risen from 38% to 58% from last year. The increase suggests that the fund is reaching additional young people who would otherwise be unstably housed and may have never accessed homeless services in the past.

3 Exit data was less comprehensive than usual because there was a period when providers had to pause entering data into HMIS. Additionally, HMIS data from Spokane was not provided in time to be published in this report. A limitation of exit data is under-reporting. Diversion providers sometimes do not formally exit clients and/or update their exit destination.
4 Among households for which exit data is available.
5 Diversion exits to a hotel or unsheltered living situation are extremely rare and are not considered a successful diversion because the client is still experiencing homelessness/housing instability.
6 The reporting period for the data in this report is May 2023-May 2024.

FIGURE 2 Housing Retention Rates of Young People Served by the HPDF, 2023-24

Almost all young people served by the HPDF stay housed.



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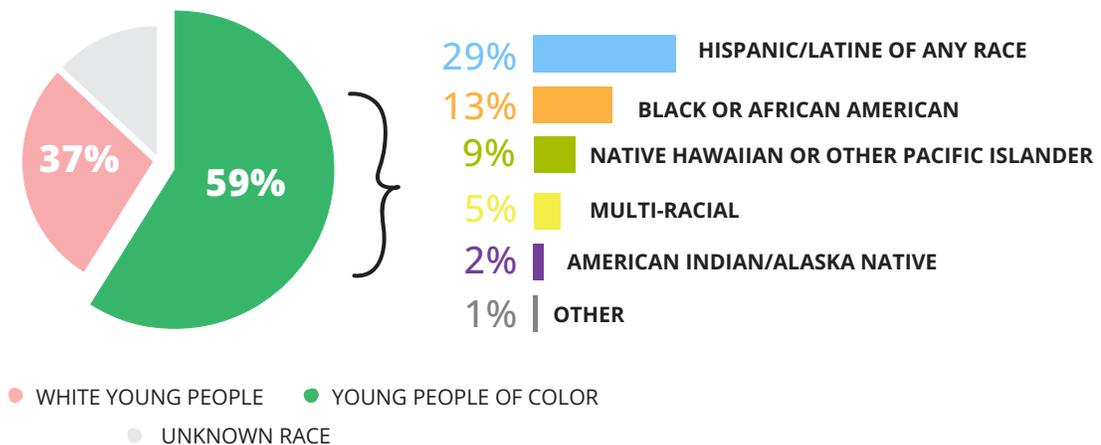
A young person’s experience goes from stable one day to completely unstable the next day, it’s dangerous. Getting all of us - Coordinated Entry included - to think about and look at things differently; that is one of the really powerful things about HPDF.

Sunny Wonder, Chief Operating Officer, Council for the Homeless, Clark County



The majority of young people that utilized HPDF as a prevention resource were young people of color, highlighting the importance of HPDF as both a tool to reduce racial disproportionality in youth homelessness, and as a prevention resource. Most of the BIPOC youth were Latine and Black/African American.

FIGURE 3 Young People at Risk of Homelessness or Unsafely Doubled Up/Couchsurfing Served by the HPDF, 2023-24



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Both LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth oftentimes don't have a relative that they can ask for help. We would see a lot LGBTQ+ young people who said “I'm cut off from my family, and I just need help with a month of rent, and I have nowhere else to go,” or BIPOC youth who said “I don't have savings, and my parents cannot pitch in for my move-in fees; there's nowhere else I can go.” We saw a lot of clients that had similar stories - we were their last resort. They said: “There's no one in my circle. There's no one in my family that can assist me with this.” I think that was really powerful.

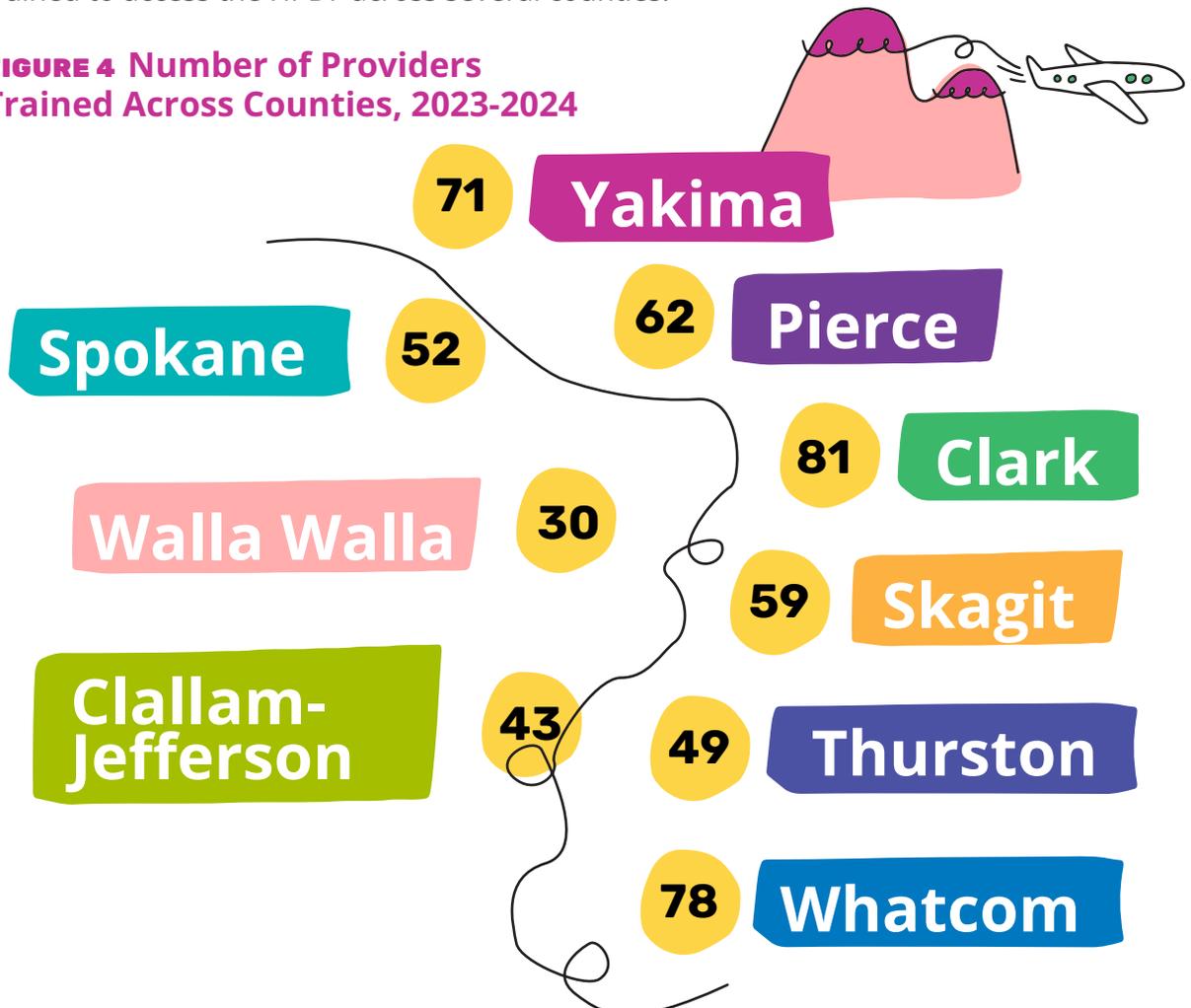
Tasmin Hopkins, HPDF Program Manager, Northwest Youth Services, Whatcom County

Providing Community-Wide Wrap-Around Support

A community-wide approach means that young people have **several access points** across the community and therefore a higher chance of getting their needs met. Instead of expecting young people to seek out the resources, youth are able to seek out support and be met with the resources wherever they are. **Anyone can become certified to access HPDF funds after attending a certification training** where they learn how to have effective, creative, and **youth-led diversion conversations** to explore housing solutions.

Instead of funding going to the largest non-profit that has the most grant-writing resources, the centralized model makes flexible funds available to all organizations in a community. The centralized approach ensures funds reach the most marginalized youth who are already accessing BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+ and disability-focused organizations. Additionally, school staff, juvenile justice programs, child welfare organizations, tribal centers, by-and-for organizations, youth advisory boards, and more, are certified. **As of May 2024, 776 providers have been certified to access the fund.** Between May 2023 and May 2024 alone, 321 providers were trained and certified, many of which were trained to access the HPDF across several counties.

FIGURE 4 Number of Providers Trained Across Counties, 2023-2024



HPDF is a Quick and Cost-Effective Path to Stable Housing

The HPDF continues to prove that the model is not just a faster way to house young people than traditional homeless services, but also a more cost-effective one. In 2024, the average cost per household through HPDF was \$2,659 which is lower than the cost of Emergency Shelter projects at \$4,318 and less than one third the cost of Rapid Re-housing (RRH), at just 26% of the average household RRH expense.

\$2,659

HPDF

\$4,318

Emergency Shelter⁸

\$10,114

Rapid Re-housing⁹

One of the standout features of the HPDF is the speedy processing time. Young people are housed quickly and spared the emotional toll of waiting for weeks or even months to secure housing. **Data shows that time is of the essence when serving youth as youth are at high risk of human trafficking and other violence, and even a short time on the street can be extremely traumatic.**¹⁰ The emphasis on such a quick turnaround provides immediate stability and prevents the long-term impacts of prolonged housing insecurity. In traditional homeless response systems that are often bogged down by waitlists and bureaucracy, the HPDF is a clear example of how to do things differently, and better.

Young people diverted by the HPDF spent significantly less time experiencing homelessness when compared to other interventions:

4 days¹¹

40 days¹²

114 days¹³

8 Average amount spent on emergency shelter per household served, from the 2023 Department of Commerce Golden Report averaged across participating counties.

9 Average amount spent on Rapid Re-housing per household served, from the 2023 Department of Commerce Golden Report averaged across participating counties.

10 McManus, H. et al. (2008). *Trauma Among Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: The Integration of Street Culture into a Model of Intervention*.

11 Average processing time of HPDF requests, which is higher than usual because of pauses in data entry and collection during the reporting year.

12 Average time spent in emergency shelter, from the 2023 Department of Commerce Golden Report.

13 Average time spent in Rapid Re-Housing, from the 2023 Department of Commerce Golden Report.

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Sometimes the delay in getting the cash out causes challenges in traditional housing programs - like the case manager finding a time to meet with you, or delays that happen when you try to meet with them because of transportation issues. There was a time when I found housing and because my case manager didn't cut the check fast enough, I lost that housing. So I had to wait another two weeks and find a different housing option.

Young Person

Top Funding Uses

Rental Assistance/Arrears and Housing Deposits continue to be the two most common assistance types requested from the HPDF, with many young people requesting funds for multiple categories of housing needs. The HPDF does not limit how much funding a young person can request for their housing situation, emphasizing housing solutions that plan for both short- and long-term housing solutions that meet the young person’s immediate housing needs.

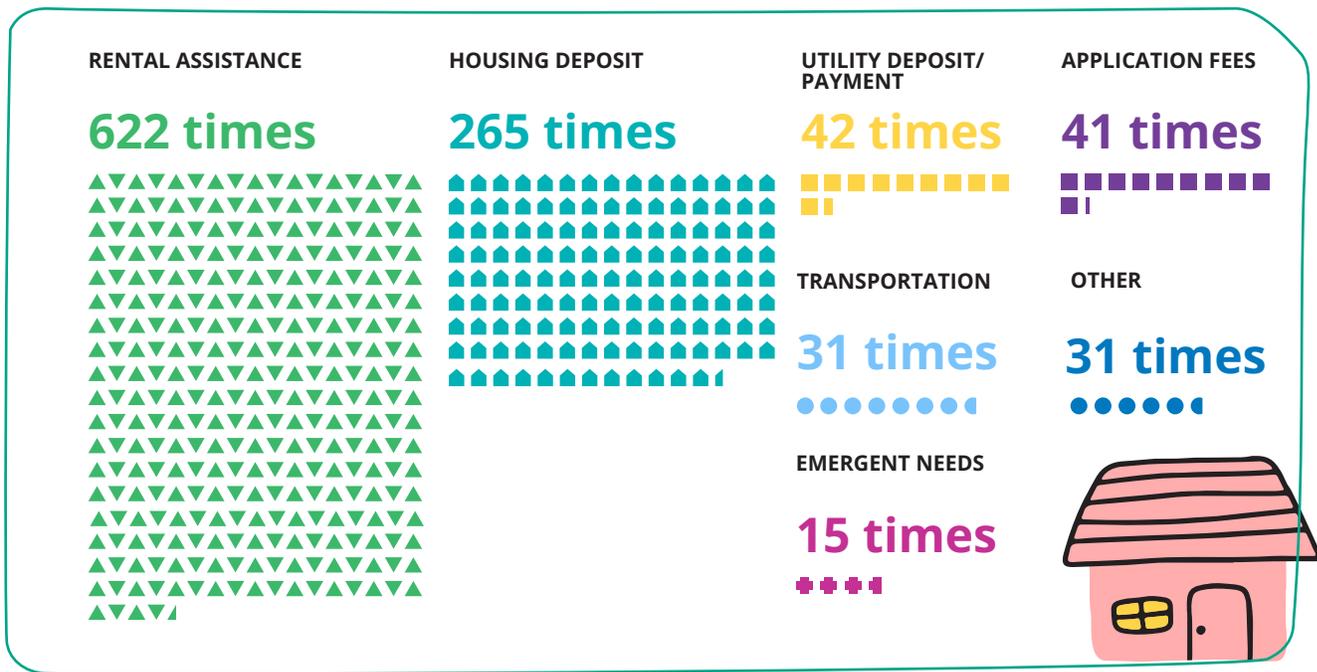


FIGURE 5 Top Funding Uses (May 2023 to May 2024)

The flexibility of the HPDF both in the broader definition of homelessness and the types of support the fund can be used for, means that YYA can get the help they need while they still have options. Young people can determine the best path for secure housing, often thinking creatively with individual needs that other programs wouldn’t know to consider, and use the funds to make it happen. By meeting them where they are, young people can preserve their relationships and natural resources that often serve as their first safety net against homelessness.

Collaboration Helps DV Survivor Flee

Janene was connected to a diversion provider at a Domestic Violence Shelter when no other resources could help. After a diversion conversation, HPDF supported Janene and her infant flee an unsafe situation by moving them quickly to reunite with family out-of-state. The fund’s flexibility allowed Janene to move out in the early morning by covering her taxi and airfare.

HPDF Provides Critical Resources Amid Eviction Relief Rollbacks

As housing prices across WA continue to rise and COVID-era relief such as the eviction moratorium and eviction prevention resources end, the HPDF is a critical resource for young people facing housing instability. Apartment vacancy rates are low, which makes it even more difficult for young people to secure rentals. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in WA is \$1,756 while the minimum wage is \$16.28/hour.¹⁴ Without spending more than 30% of their income, **a young person would need to work 83 hours per week or have 2.1 full-time minimum wage jobs to afford a modest one-bedroom rental.** The unaffordability and lack of housing is a stark reminder of the increased challenges young people face in maintaining stable housing.

FIGURE 6 HPDF Average Costs of Rental Assistance/Arrears, 2021-24



In 2024, the HPDF served 498 households with rental assistance and/or rental arrears support, a pronounced increase from previous years, reflecting a continuing upward trend. While the data is not conclusive that all the rental assistance/arrears requests were directly tied to eviction prevention, feedback confirms an uptick in eviction-related needs. The surge in requests illustrates the growing financial pressures on young people as housing costs climb and emergency supports fade. With rising rents and limited affordable options, many YYA are on the brink of losing their housing. In particular, young people of color were the biggest recipients of rental assistance and rental arrears support - **58% of YYA accessing rental assistance/arrears were BIPOC.**

¹⁴ Harati, R. et al. (2024). *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing*. National Low Income Housing Coalition.



When I was looking for housing, the cheapest options were in the most unsafe neighborhoods. You're surrounded by the streets where it was dangerous, where you were trying to escape from in the first place. So it's really easy to go back to hanging out with crowds that weren't the best influence.

Young Person

The demand for HPDF resources to combat the increase in housing instability has been unprecedented. **Total requests for rental assistance/arrears jumped from 308 to 622 in the past year.** However, the sheer volume of requests in some communities meant that they had to deny requests simply because they ran out of funds. The funds were depleted quickly in some communities like Thurston and Clark counties, highlighting both the urgent need for flexible housing resources and the limitations of current eviction prevention funding.

The HPDF is playing a crucial role in keeping housing instability at bay for many young people across WA, but the impact of soaring housing costs and the lack of broader eviction prevention resources may not yet be fully evident. The fund's ability to respond quickly and flexibly is helping to stem the tide, but **the growing need for prevention resources, particularly eviction prevention, highlights the urgency of the moment.** The HPDF has proven to be a vital tool in this landscape, but continued investment is needed to address the root causes of housing instability as the economic climate continues to shift.

Eviction Prevention and Rental Arrears Examples:

Rheanna is a university student in Spokane. When her roommate moved out, she was burdened with the full cost of rent and fell behind. She was served an eviction notice while looking for another roommate. The HPDF was able to pay that month's rent so she could maintain her housing until her new roommate moved in.

Corrie has been couch surfing in Clark after his lease ended at his last apartment and he could not afford to stay there. He is employed full time but couldn't move into a new apartment until his debt was paid for his previous one. The HPDF paid his rental arrears to give him the freedom to obtain stable housing again.

In 2024, data collection methods were improved to better track and distinguish between move-in rental assistance and arrears requests, ensuring eviction prevention requests can be more accurately measured versus move-in rental assistance requests.

“

Prior to HPDF, there were just less options, less avenues, and a lot more evictions.

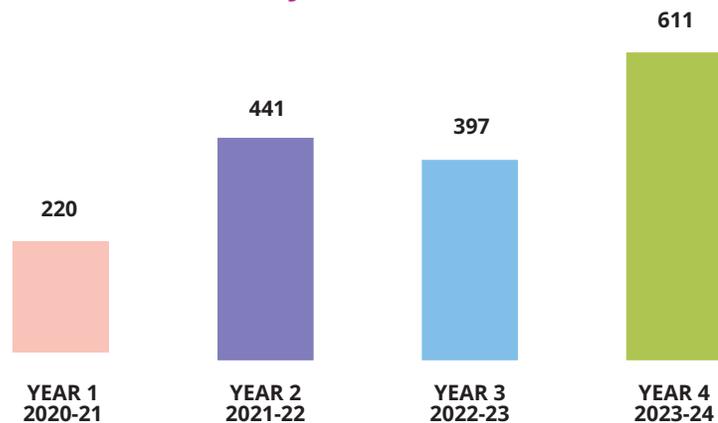
Tasmin Hopkins, HPDF Program Manager,
Northwest Youth Services, Whatcom County



HPDF Continues Building on Success of Previous Years

Year after year, the HPDF strengthens its impact across Washington, evident in the growth of households served. Since the fund was launched, the HPDF has seen a 178% increase in yearly households served, **growing from 220 in the first year to 611 in 2024.**

FIGURE 7 Households Served by the HPDF, 2021-24



Almost all HPDF clients (for which exit data was available) remained stably housed twelve months post-diversion:

93%

MAY 2022

92%

MAY 2023

93%

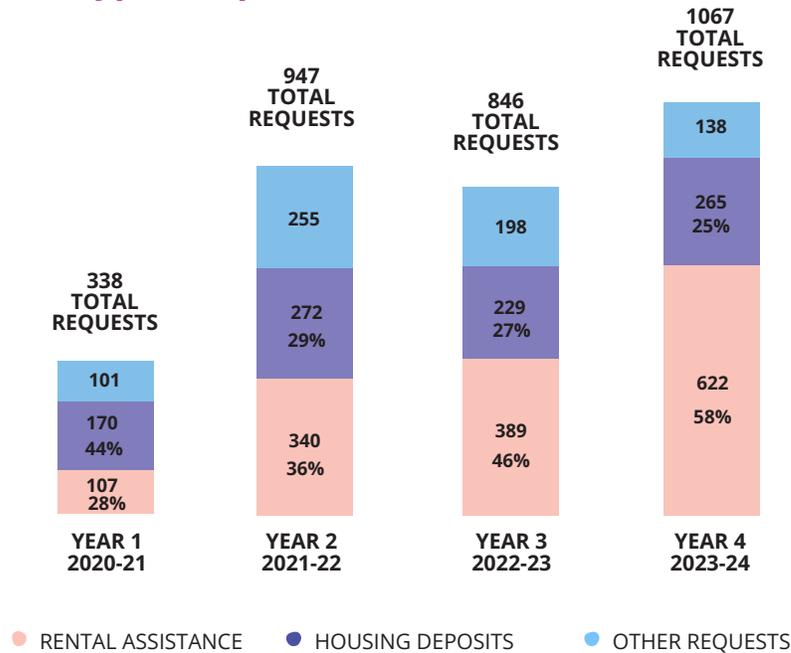
MAY 2024

The average cost for an HPDF intervention has **steadily climbed from \$1,356 in Year 1 to \$2,659; almost doubling by Year 4.** The increase mirrors the rising costs of living and rental rates, and is exacerbated by the end of the early COVID-era eviction protections and additional resources.

A Helping Hand
Kedren got behind on rent when unexpected expenses came up. He is employed and will be able to pay rent in the future, but after receiving a fourteen day notice to pay or vacate, he needed help catching up on rent. The HPDF helped pay three months of rental arrears to keep Kedren stably housed.

As WA's housing landscape has shifted, so too have young people's HPDF requests. In Year 1, **the majority of requests were spent on housing deposits (44%), with less than a third of requests for rental assistance (28%), and a little over a quarter of requests were for other solutions (26%)**. Each year, the HPDF has seen sharp upticks in requests for rental assistance, which now account for 58% of total requests; more than double the proportion seen in Year 1. In contrast, both housing deposits and other types of fund requests have seen a steady decline in utilization with each passing year.

FIGURE 8 Fund Types Requested, 2021-2024



"Other" funding requests include: emergent needs, transportation, employment, application fees, storage, and utility deposit/payment.

The trends in requested funds, housing stability rate, and households served underscore HPDF's dynamicism and strong housing outcomes. Additionally, HPDF's program success over the years indicates that the program's flexible funding is **filling broader gaps in many communities' homeless crisis response systems**.



Prior to the introduction of HPDF in our community, young adults and youth face significant challenges in securing housing because there were fewer options for move-in costs or to pay arrears in Clark County. It's so costly for move-in fees. This just opened up avenues for youth and young adults to secure housing and enable them to find stable housing solutions through diversion.

Gina Ochoa, Diversion Supervisor,
Council for the Homeless, Clark County

When Young People Take the Wheel: Creative Solutions in Action

Creativity is key to the HPDF's success. The program's flexibility allows for housing solutions that are as unique as each young person and their individual housing needs and situation. All names in the below examples have been altered.

FIGURE 9
Creative Ways the HPDF
was Used in 2024



Alex was experiencing homelessness while attending college because they had plans to live on campus but changes in financial aid caused a gap in funding. They got connected with HPDF through a counselor at a local youth support center. The counselor helped Alex enroll in classes and HPDF covered his housing costs. Alex received the funding needed for housing by the next day.

Yumi had been couchsurfing for some time and did not have any family support. She had a part-time job and found a studio apartment that was willing to rent to her despite her low credit score. But Yumi didn't have enough funds to cover move-in costs. HPDF helped Yumi put a down-payment on the apartment, which she was able to maintain long-term.



Claire lives in Thurston and depends on her vehicle to get to her night shift job since buses don't run at the hours she needs. After her car was flooded and her insurance wouldn't cover the cost of repairs, she was at risk of losing her job and therefore her housing. The HPDF was able to pay for a one-time repair to her car so they could maintain their housing.



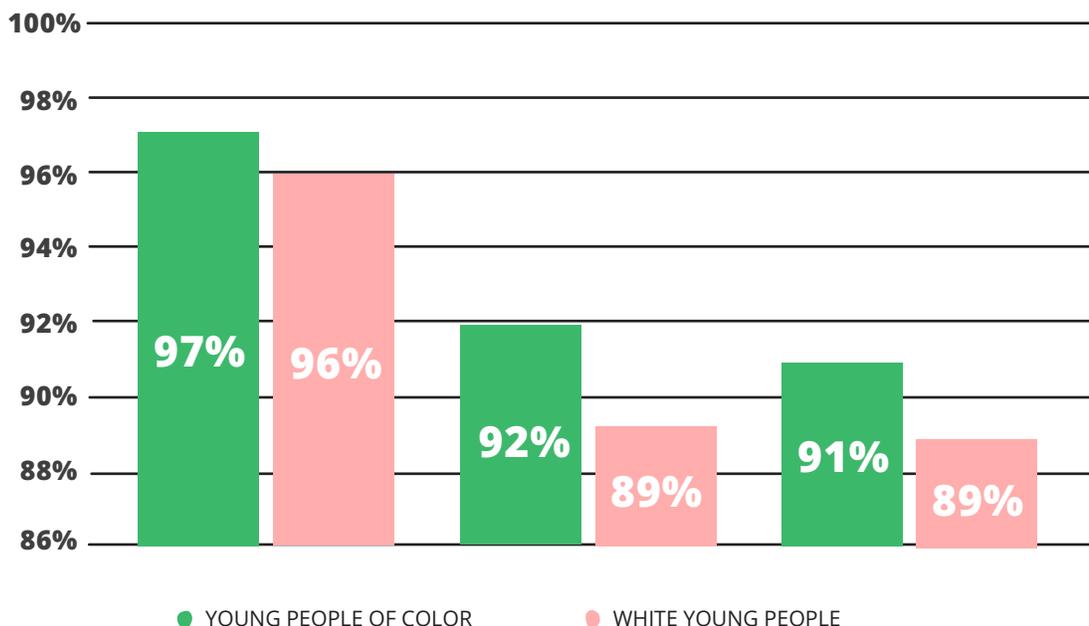
HPDF Drives Equity in Youth Homelessness Response

The spirit of diversion is at the heart of the HPDF, which means that the fund is more than just a housing resource, it is an equity tool. The spirit of diversion in practice is listening to young people, removing barriers, and finding ways to say “yes.” Ending youth and young adult homelessness means ending it for all. Young people of color, LGBTQIA2S+, QTBIPOC, pregnant and/or parenting, and disabled YYA experience homelessness at disproportionate rates due to systemic disparities, where the systems in which they seek support are often built to say “no.” Communities across WA have taken the charge to improve their housing systems, which is only possible through the dismantling of systemic oppression. The HPDF model is an effective approach for tackling equity issues and reaching marginalized young people.

All demographic data collected through the HPDF is self-identified by young people who get to choose if, what, and when they want to share. The HPDF training and associated technical assistance is grounded in racial justice and equity frameworks and is essential to ensure that young people’s autonomy is supported and that the data reflects their true experiences and identities. Having demographic data provides a critical lens through which disparities can be measured and actions can be taken to ensure all young people are equitably served.

The data shows that HPDF is particularly successful at keeping BIPOC young people housed long-term.

FIGURE 10 HPDF Housing Stability Rates at 3, 6, and 12 Months by Race, 2023-24



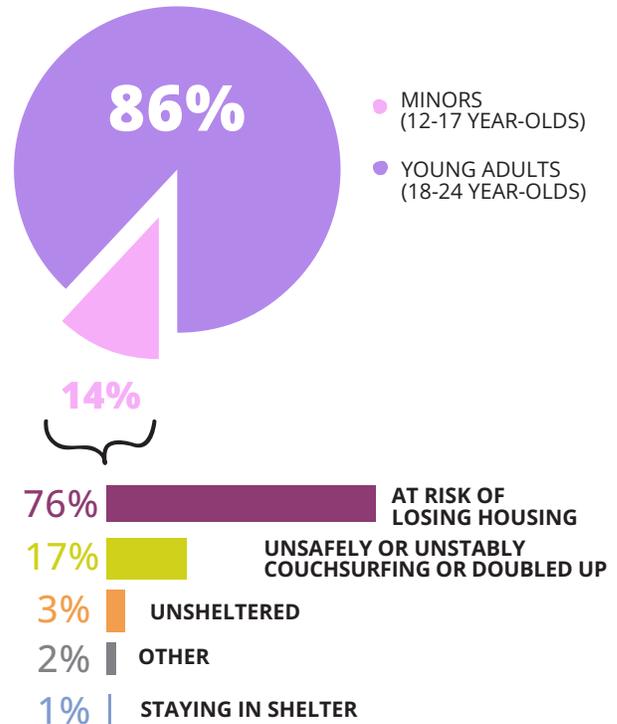
Housing stability rates only include young people for which exit data is available in HMIS. Total number of BIPOC youth: 220. Total number of White youth: 114.

Age:

The HPDF is the first multi-community flexible fund program to serve both unaccompanied minors and young adults, filling a critical service gap for youth under eighteen. **Minors under eighteen experience some of the highest barriers to accessing housing, from a lack of dedicated youth-specific resources to navigating complex legal barriers around consent and child welfare.** Minors are also more likely to be unstably housed, doubled up, or couch-surfing than unsheltered or in a shelter. As a result, minors are often underserved, but at high risk for commercial sexual exploitation and face considerable barriers to accessing housing.

More than three quarters (76%) of the minors served through the HPDF were at imminent risk of losing their housing, and 17% were doubled up, couch surfing, or in an unsafe or unstable situation. 3% of minors were unsheltered and only 1% were staying in a shelter.

FIGURE 11 Age Groups and Living Situations of Minors Served, 2023-24



HPDF is Low Cost and Ideal For Stabilizing Minors

In 2024, the Housing Justice Collective collaborated with youth consultants with lived experience and Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC) to make informed estimates about the types of pathways and costs of interventions needed for unaccompanied minors under 18 to attain housing. **The HPDF was one of the lowest cost interventions and an ideal pathway to housing stability, estimated to support 10%-25% of unaccompanied minors across the four regions of WA.**¹⁵

¹⁵ Housing Justice Collective. (2024). *Modeling for Housing Stability for Youth Under 18 in Washington State*.



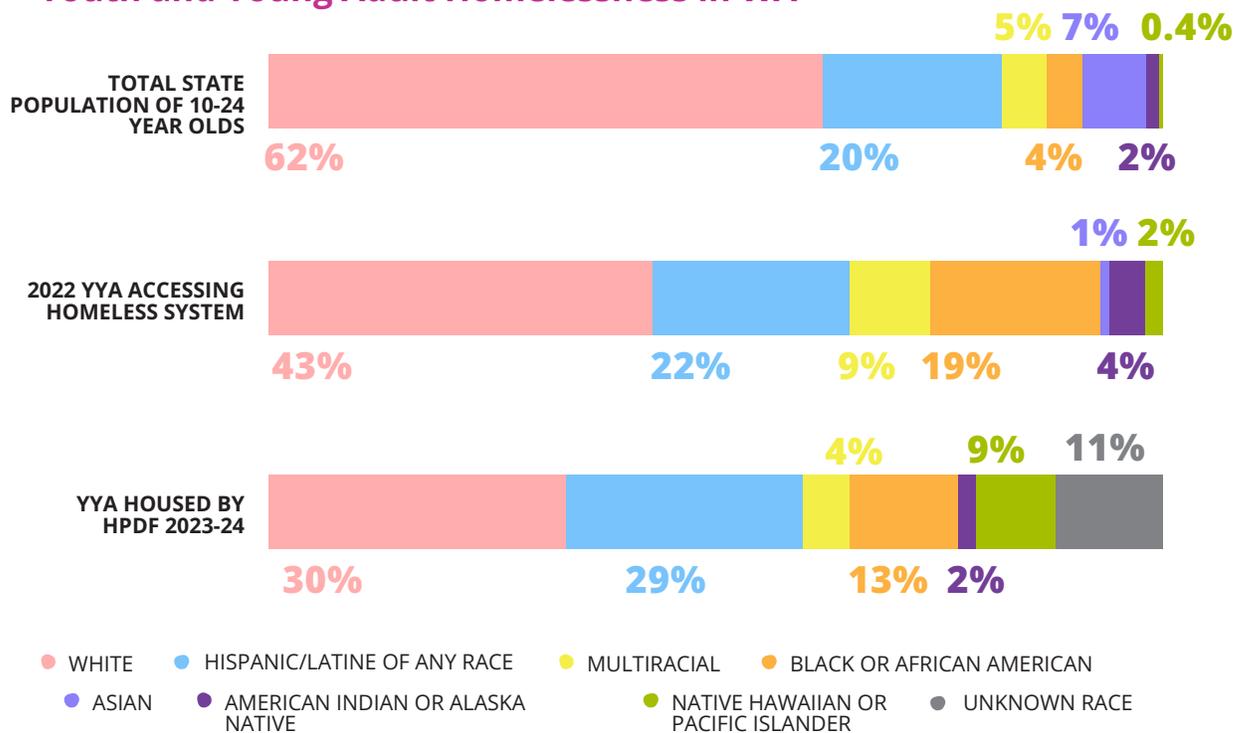
I became homeless when I was 17, and you can't get housing when you're 17 - you have to be 18 to hold the lease. So in order to even access diversion funds available at the time, I had to wait until I was 18. And the only options they gave you were shelters.

Young Person

Race and Ethnicity:

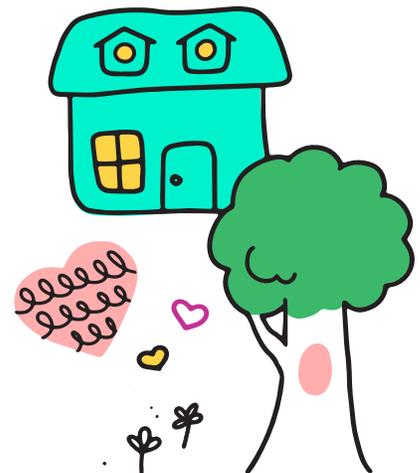
By design, the HPDF addresses systemic inequities that disproportionately impact young people of color. HPDF flips the provider-client relationship and instead gives space for young people to have self-determination to lead the conversation and choose the solution. Limited access points and restrictive funding structures have historically excluded marginalized communities. **When restrictions are removed and eligibility is expanded, young people can be served in an equitable way.** This is illustrated by the steady trend of the HPDF serving a higher proportion of BIPOC young people than their representation in the general population each year.

FIGURE 12 Racial Disproportionality in Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in WA



Recreated from the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)-AWHWA 2024 Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness Landscape Scan. YYA = unaccompanied youth and young adults. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Population of interest is 12-24-year-olds, but Census data on 10-24-year-olds is used as best available data. HPDF = Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund.

Census data was used to compare the general population of 10-24-year-olds to the population of unaccompanied young people served by the HPDF. 2020 Census Estimates by the WA Office of Financial Management (OFM) were available for the age ranges 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24. These age groups were combined to create a population estimate for young people aged 10-24, even though the population of interest is 12-24-year-olds. While this should be considered when comparing the populations, including 10 and 11-year-olds should not alter the race/ethnicity proportion significantly.



HMIS data from the OHY-AWHWA [Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness Landscape Scan](#) was used to compare the proportions of the races and ethnicities of young people who accessed the homeless system in 2022 to the proportions that were housed through the HPDF.

This year, 59% of YYA served by the HPDF were BIPOC, consistent with previous years. Whereas, in the general population of 10-24 year olds in WA, BIPOC YYA make up only 38%.¹⁶ Consistent with last year's findings, when comparing the population of unaccompanied YYA that accessed the homelessness system across WA in 2022, the proportion of BIPOC YYA who accessed the HPDF are similar. **However, there continues to be a growing difference for the Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander populations.**

“

HPDF really helped us rebuild connections with Lummi Nation and Northwest Indian College, I think because we were able to provide such efficient financial support that they had a lot of autonomy over. It rebuilt some trust between our agency and them.

Tasmin Hopkins, HPDF Program Manager,
Northwest Youth Services, Whatcom County



“

Our traditional services, like our shelter and our outreach work, has historically underserved youth who are primarily Spanish speaking, bilingual, or in mixed language households. We have been working at creating belonging, and having culturally competent services. But alongside this, HPDF has become a really helpful tool for these complex situations.

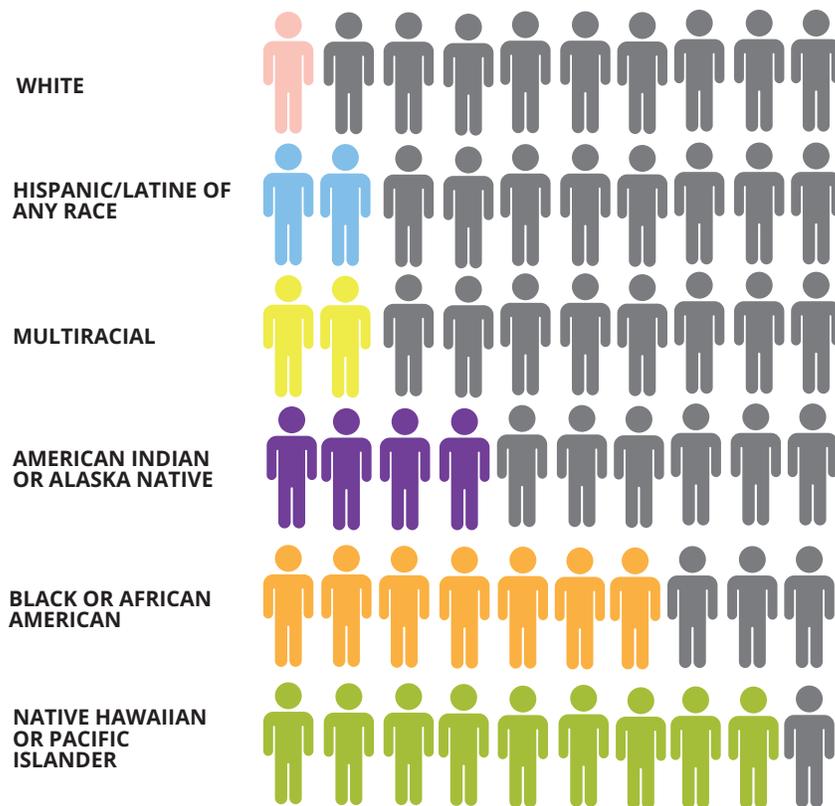
Kat Lohman, Executive Director of Social Impact,
Skagit Valley Family YMCA, Skagit County

¹⁶ Harding Chao, L., and Castro, L. (2024). *Yes to Yes Washington State: Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Landscape Scan*.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) Youth:

NHOPI young people face some of the most significant disparities in unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness in WA.¹⁷ When comparing the rates of homeless system access per one hundred 10-24 year olds of each racial group, the data shows that NHOPI young people were nine times more likely than White young people to access the homelessness system.

FIGURE 13 Comparison of Homeless System Access Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2022



Recreated from the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)-AWHWA 2024 Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness Landscape Scan

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander YYA make up only 0.4% of the general population of 10-24 year olds in WA, but are represented 5 times more in the homelessness system,¹⁸ according to 2022 data. The HPDF continues to make meaningful strides in reaching NHOPI youth with 9% of households served this year identifying as NHOPI. This year, **NHOPI YYA were served by the HPDF at 22.5 times the proportion they appear in the general population (9% compared to 0.4%),** up from 15 times last year (6%). Partnering with organizations led by and serving BIPOC and NHOPI populations has been a key strategy in this last year to close the gap for NHOPI young people and ensure they have the access to the resources they need to stay stably housed. By centering racial justice in program design and implementation, the HPDF proves that equitable housing solutions are possible.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

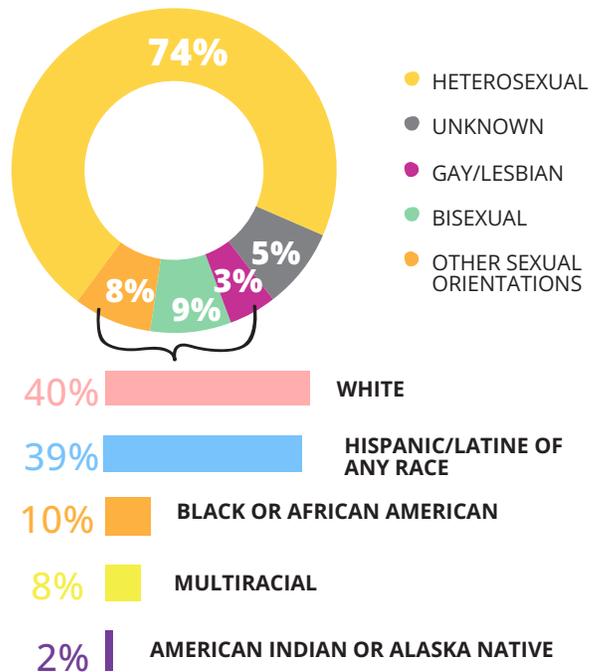
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) data are crucial to understanding and supporting the unique challenges faced by LGBTQIA2S+ youth and young adults, who are overrepresented in homelessness systems. According to the “Voices of Youth Count” by Chapin Hall, LGBTQIA2S+ young people have a 120% higher risk of experiencing homelessness, yet their stories and needs are often overlooked due to gaps in data collection. From the beginning, HPDF has been committed to not only shifting the culture around flexible housing solutions, but also the collection and utilization of the data to serve LGBTQIA2S+ youth. Visibility is the key to designing systems intentionally, and the HPDF is providing the blueprint for these efforts.

From May 2023 to May 2024, **21% of households served by the HPDF identified as LGBTQ+, 74% as heterosexual, and 5% were unknown.** While national data suggests that 20-40% of young people experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+,¹⁹ HPDF data still may be an undercount. However, the fact that only 5% of sexual orientation data for the HPDF is unknown is a remarkable achievement when compared to the 66% of unknown sexual orientation data for YYA in Washington’s HMIS system, reported in the 2022 OHY - AWHWA Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness Landscape Scan. While more work can always be done to improve data quality, the **low levels of unknown data shows that HPDF is a leader and national model in SOGI data collection.**

SOGI data are two separate categories in HMIS, describing different identities (LGBQ+ and gender-expansive), however, LGBQ+ young people often identify as gender expansive and vice versa. Each category faces its own unique challenges in data collection. Sexual orientation data is less high quality than gender identity data because sexual orientation is not collected across all programs.

The HPDF saw increased numbers of LGBQ+ and Hispanic/Latine young people this reporting period, **with 39% of LGBQ+ youth also identifying as Hispanic/Latine compared to 15% in 2022-23.**

FIGURE 14 Sexual Orientation of Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24



19 National Coalition for the Homeless. *Homelessness Among the LGBTQ Community.*

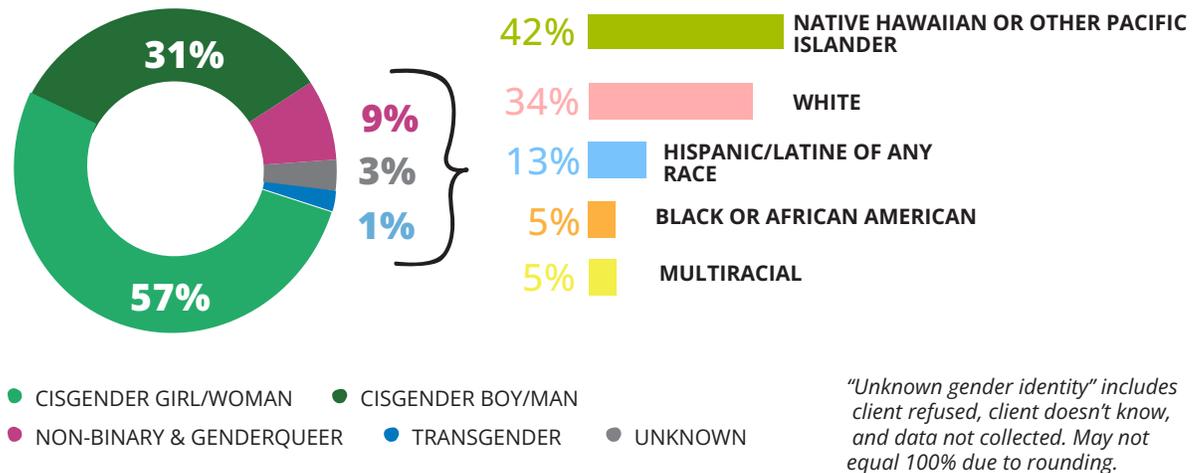


“Other sexual orientations” includes: Demisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Queer, and Questioning.
 “Unknown sexual orientation” includes: client refused, client doesn’t know, and data not collected. May not equal 100%

While gender identity has less unknown data than sexual orientation, young people have reported not wanting to or not being able to share their true identity due to safety concerns, fear of discrimination, and/or retaliation. In both cases, the data reported is usually not the full picture.

A study by System Change Partners of Household Pulse Data (Census data) showed that as many as 1 in 10 young adults are both gender-expansive and LGBTQ+, while more than 1 in 10 young adults are gender expansive.²⁰ However, other estimates suggest lower numbers, with 1% of youth aged 13-17 and 2% of young adults aged 18-24 identifying as transgender.²¹ **Of YYA served by the HPDF between May 2023 and May 2024, 9% identified as gender expansive.** While HPDF data still may be an undercount, **the data suggests that gender-expansive young people access HPDF at higher rates than they are in the general population.**

FIGURE 15 Gender Identity of Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24



Of the 611 households served by the HPDF, **10% identified as non-binary, transgender, or genderqueer.** While this represents a relatively small number of households (38), the majority of these young people were BIPOC. **Over one-third (42%) were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, which shows that the HPDF is effective at reaching young people most disproportionately impacted by homelessness.**

The certification training and ongoing assistance for the HPDF is grounded in anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia, and disrupting harmful narratives. Providers are supported and equipped with the skills required to create safe and affirming spaces for young people to share their identities. Collecting accurate SOGI data is more than just numbers, it is the commitment to showing up for young people, in their full identities, to say they are seen and they matter.

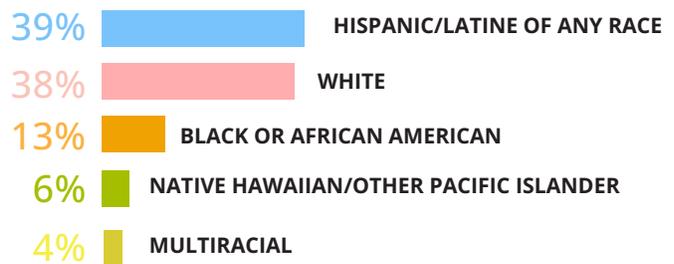
20 Harding Chao, L. (2023). *Over One Third of Young Adults in the United States are LGBTQ+.*

21 Harding Chao, L., and Castro, L. (2024). *Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness Landscape Scan.*

Pregnant and Parenting:

In 2024, the percentage of households served by the HPDF who were pregnant and/or parenting increased. **Pregnant and parenting households made up over one-third (38%) of the 611 households served this year, a 50% increase from last year's 25%.** YYA with children are often excluded when reporting on unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness, even though they face substantial barriers to accessing stable housing. **The majority of the pregnant and/or parenting young people served by the HPDF between May 2023 and May 2024 were BIPOC. Most notably, 39% identified as Hispanic/Latine.**

FIGURE 16 Race/Ethnicities of Pregnant/Parenting Youth and Young Adults Served by the HPDF, 2023-24



Disabilities:

Disabilities include physical or medical conditions, diagnoses, and/or debilitating symptoms, situations, and/or experiences. Disability data was collected for 58% of the total households served.²² **1 in 5 young people served by the HPDF (for which data was available) identified as having a disability** for this reporting period. But this is lower than usual and is likely an undercount, given that disability data was not collected for 42% of households and data from Pierce and Spokane was not included.²³ **42% of households with disabilities also identified as LGBTQ+.**

²² Disability data is gathered from HMIS data reports and is only available for clients who have been exited in the HMIS.

²³ Pierce's disability data had anomalies and was excluded from the analysis of disability data. Spokane's HMIS data was not received in time for inclusion in this report.



Finding housing can be challenging when balancing parenting. Sometimes we have to cancel appointments because they are scheduled on weekends when we have our kids.

Young Person

Recommendations

HPDF continues to be utilized at high rates, and in many cases, is the only diversion fund specifically for youth and young adults in communities. As such, the HPDF is pivotal for WA's efforts to prevent, reduce, and end YYA homelessness. With the closure of A Way Home Washington (AWHWA) in late 2024, the HPDF is transitioning to new statewide technical assistance and programmatic support. Amid significant upheaval in HPDF infrastructure, ensuring fidelity to the centralized model and supporting local Fiscal Administrators is paramount. Recommendations outlined below were gathered in partnership with HPDF Fiscal Administrators, certified providers, and young people with lived experience.

1. Migrate program infrastructure to communities to mitigate infrastructure challenges:

Fiscal Administrators noted challenges with the lack of backend integration of HMIS, supporting documents, and request forms. Current HPDF reporting structures and HMIS are not linked, so administrators must create their own processes, creating more room for human error. HPDF certification training and related support could also shift to the community level to lessen reliance on a third-party provider while strengthening local communities' ability to directly steward the program.

2. Improve funding procurement process by considering HPDF utilization and By-Name List Data to better tailor distributions:

The HPDF has traditionally been distributed via a competitive procurement process every other year. With five new counties starting HPDF in 2023-24, new counties had to estimate funding levels without having historical data. As a result, at least two counties ran out of funds quickly. For example, Thurston County spent down their Year 1 funds in a matter of weeks, but other counties such as Clallam-Jefferson did not spend down the funds as quickly. Fiscal Administrators expressed a need for better integration of utilization and By-Name List data to right-size fund distribution and ensure young people can be served throughout the full fiscal year.

3. Invest in more efficient and sustainable technology platform to streamline processes as the HPDF continues to grow:

While HPDF has been successfully scaled across ten counties, the original HPDF data infrastructure was not initially created with the resources necessary to scale the program statewide. A more streamlined technology platform that allows communities to integrate processes, automate payments, and reduce duplicate data entry is needed to improve on-the-ground operations.



It was really clunky to try to make things work between the community-level and then HMIS. Figuring out how we make that a smoother process, and not entering the same data in multiple places would improve local operations.

Kat Lohman, Executive Director of Social Impact,
Skagit Valley Family YMCA, Skagit County

4. Re-establish statewide technical assistance to ensure fidelity to centralized diversion model:

Since HPDF was established in 2020, program policies and procedures and technical assistance support was held by AWHWA, which closed at the end of 2024. Fiscal Administrators expressed an ongoing need for technical assistance, considering local staff transitions and gaps in training, onboarding, and one-to-one support. Additionally, Fiscal Administrators identified a continued need for a statewide convener for resource and knowledge sharing while ensuring fidelity to the program model. Establishing a third party technical assistance provider is essential to fill stated gaps.

5. Develop statewide solutions to the housing affordability crisis and provide more eviction prevention resources:

Inflation and rent rates continue to rise, greatly impacting what housing options are available to young people through diversion. The current statewide annual rate of rent growth is 3%.²⁴ Rent increases were highest in Clallam County in 2024, which experienced an 11.1% increase in average rent rates from 2023 to 2024.²⁵ Additionally, with the end of COVID-era eviction support, eviction prevention HPDF requests are at an all-time high. The HPDF is easy to access, but as a one-time, light-touch resource, the program cannot address the root causes of housing unaffordability that greatly impact young people.

6. Increase HPDF funding to expand statewide to all thirty-nine counties:

HPDF is more versatile than traditional programs, working effectively across a diverse range of communities. The fund is especially effective in rural communities, which lack brick and mortar resources, but have higher rates of youth homelessness than urban areas.²⁶ Rural youth are more likely to be experiencing “hidden” homelessness, often couchsurfing, sleeping in vehicles, or staying outdoors,²⁷ which makes HPDF critical in rural communities. HPDF brought low-barrier and flexible youth-specific diversion funds to communities for the first time, ensuring that youth do not get lost in the adult system, where they often do not get prioritized for housing support. The program needs increased investments to expand statewide to all thirty-nine counties.

“

We didn’t have funding that was specifically for young folks before HPDF. And often, if we’re going off of a system that identifies vulnerability, young folks are [not prioritized] in the way that we gauge vulnerability in homeless response systems.

Sunny Wonder, Chief Operating Officer, Council for the Homeless, Clark County

24 *Washington State Apartment Market Report, 2nd Quarter 2024*, University of Washington.

25 Ibid.

26 Harding Chao, L., and Castro, L. (2024). *Unaccompanied YYA Homelessness Landscape Scan*.

27 Morton, M. et al. (2018). *Rural Counties Lack Services For Youth Experiencing Homelessness*.

Acknowledgements

The Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF) continues to inspire communities in their journey to end youth homelessness, not just in WA, but around the United States and abroad. The HPDF model has been re-produced and iterated upon at a national scale by [Point Source Youth's Direct Cash Transfers as Prevention program](#) across seven states, and the National Prevention Learning Collaborative. **The HPDF is made possible through the tireless dedication of frontline providers and Fiscal Administrators working diligently to make stable housing an immediate and tangible reality.** The communities, service providers, and young people are the movement.

Thank You Fiscal Administrators: Volunteers of America (Spokane), Blue Mountain Community Foundation & Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington (Walla Walla), Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (Yakima), Y Social Impact Center (Pierce), Council for the Homeless (Clark), Olympic Community Action Programs (Clallam-Jefferson), Northsound Accountable Community of Health & Skagit Valley Family YMCA (Skagit), Northwest Youth Services (Whatcom), and Family Support Center of South Sound (Thurston).



The combination of public and private funding is the backbone of the HPDF, enabling the model to be scaled. **Washington State Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth's (OHY) funding and leadership made the expansion to ten counties possible. The Schultz Family Foundation continues to be a steadfast advocate and investor,** providing critical resources to close funding gaps and ensure the program's sustainability.

Most importantly, **System Change Partners and NorthStar Advocates extend our gratitude to the young people** who have shared their stories and trusted us with their experiences, providing vital feedback that is needed to continue to improve the fund. Young people's insights are essential in efforts to continue designing resources and systems that fit their needs with their voices front and center. Thank you.

Key Terms & Definitions:

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| By-and-For Organizations and Groups | Organizations or programs that are created by community, for community. Specifically, organizations that are led by and serving LGBTQIA2S+, QTBIPOC and BIPOC populations. |
| By-Name List (BNL) | A By-Name List is a real-time accounting of young people who are experiencing unaccompanied homelessness in a community. The list is used to triage the needs of young people experiencing homelessness, match them with the appropriate interventions to permanently end their homelessness, understand needs relative to resources, and measure progress toward ending homelessness for young people. |
| Cisgender | People who identify as their sex assigned at birth. |
| Diversion Conversations | An exploratory conversation between a certified diversion provider and a young person that explores, identifies, and creates a plan for housing young people using resources and points of connection in the young person's own network. The conversation should be led by the young person, with the diversion provider as a thought partner. |
| Gender-expansive | Young people who identify as transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, culturally-specific gender such as Two-Spirit, gender non-conforming, or gender fluid. |
| Homelessness | Based on the McKinney-Vento Definition of homelessness . Young people between the ages of 12-24 unaccompanied by a parent or guardian who are unsheltered or living in places unfit for human habitation, in shelter, or unsafely or unstably housed. This includes young people who are fleeing domestic violence and trafficking and those who may be unsafely or unstably couchsurfing or doubled-up. |
| Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) | Refers to the Washington State Balance of State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) maintained by the Department of Commerce as well as data from independent HMIS' maintained by Spokane, Pierce, and Clark Counties. HMIS is used by service providers to collect and manage data gathered while providing housing assistance to people already experiencing homelessness and households at risk of losing their housing. |
| LGBQ+ | LGBQ+ is used to differentiate sexual orientation from gender identity because these are collected separately in the homelessness and other data systems. When in reality, many queer young people are also gender-expansive and vice versa. |

Key Terms & Definitions (continued):



| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| LGBTQIA2S+ | Young people who identify on the LGBTQIA2S+ spectrum, including, but not limited to, young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning, intersexual, asexual and Twospirit, or other culturally-specific gender. |
| Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) | The Washington State Office of Homeless Youth, a key partner of AHWHA based in the Washington State Department of Commerce and the primary funder for the HPDF. |
| QTBIPOC | The term stands for Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous People of Color and was developed as a way to highlight the specific needs of BIPOC people within the LGBTQIA2S+ community. |
| Unaccompanied youth or young adult | Young people between the ages of 12 and 24 who are not in the care of a parent or legal guardian; young people who are experiencing homelessness while disconnected from their families. |
| Youth | A minor between the ages of 12-17. |
| Young Adult | A young person between the ages of 18-24. |
| Young People of Color | Young people who identify as Hispanic or Latine (of any race), Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Asian, Multiracial, and American Indian or Alaska Native. |