

Innovation Team's Portfolio to Reduce Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

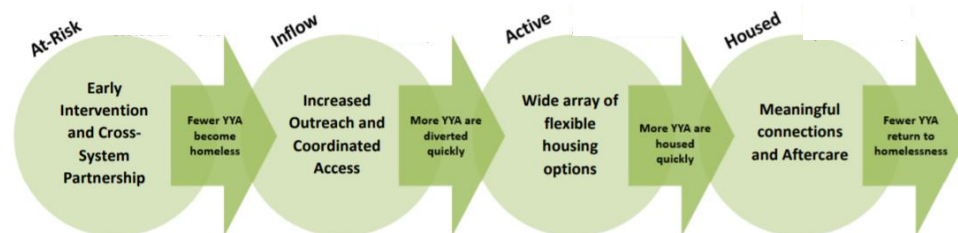
THE NEED // INTRODUCTION

In 2017, 11,643 individuals experiencing homelessness were counted in King County. An estimated 2,833 individuals were in families with children, 135 of those families were households headed by a young parent under 25 years of age. An estimated 1,498 individuals were unaccompanied youth and young adults, including 221 unaccompanied minors. Since 2013, the number of homeless students in Seattle Public Schools increased by 55% to 3,612.

As the crisis of homelessness grows, City of Seattle, King County, Seattle Public Schools, and other organizations throughout the region are committed to working together to find ways to reduce episodes of homelessness and improve outcomes. There is an overall recognition that our region needs to design better programs and services to meet the unique needs of young people. The Innovation Team recognized this gap in the homeless response system and took the opportunity to leverage the team's multi-disciplinary approach to collaborate across agencies and generate creative solutions for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

OUR APPROACH // OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Innovation Team endeavors to implement initiatives that optimize system performance and coordination to more efficiently, effectively, and equitably connect you and young adults experiencing homelessness to a path to stability. Our theory of change aligns with the All Home King County Coordinated Community Plan's framework for understanding the level of need and which interventions and approaches are necessary to reach our community's goals of making homelessness among youth and young adults rare, and if it does occur, ensuring it is brief and a one-time occurrence.



Desired short-term outcomes

- Improved ability to exercise self-determination and forward momentum
- Improved academic outcomes and college and career readiness
- Increased opportunities to connect with caring adults
- Reduced racial disparities

Desired long-term outcomes

- Episodes of homelessness are brief and there is a decrease in episode length
- Episodes of homeless are one time and decrease in returns to homelessness
- Episodes of homelessness are rare, increase in prevention
- Increased exits from homelessness system to stable housing

DEPARTMENT PARTNERS
Human Services Department (HSD) Homeless Strategy & Investments Division

Department of Education and Early Learning

Office of Arts & Culture

PROJECT DURATION
2017 - 2018

IMPACT
Decrease in length and episodes of homelessness
Increased exits to stable housing

KEY DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

- Randy Engstrom
- Veronica Gallardo
- Tiffany Washington

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

- Adam Petkun (IP)

THE RESULTS // THE PORTFOLIO

- **School Housing Partnership:** The School Housing Partnership seeks to strengthen Seattle Public Schools' capacity to serve students experiencing housing instability through the identification of a housing partner to work with SPS on serving McKinney-Vento students and families. In 2018, the City invested in third-party consultant support to review processes related to identification, enrollment, and service delivery for McKinney-Vento students and make recommendations related to data management to ensure accurate reporting. Concurrently, the Innovation Team partnered with All Home King County to hire a Housing Navigator dedicated to helping unaccompanied SPS students access and secure housing with funding from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project. Moving forward, the full vision of the Student Housing Partnership - a full-scale housing partner for SPS - is being considered as a part of the City's Families, Education, Preschool and Promise Plan.



- **Milestone:** In the Innovation Team's ethnographic research, we heard from youth and young adults experiencing homelessness that it can often be hard to build relationships with case managers and stay connected. Informed by user testing sessions with both youth and case workers, the Milestone app seeks to provide new tools for engagement between case managers and their youth and young adult clients to move towards stability while providing agency and developmentally-appropriate supports. This initiative was catalyzed by a collaboration with Artefact, a Seattle-based design consultancy, and a prototype of the app has been developed by the University of Washington.



- **Creative Advantage - Empowering Homeless Youth Through Arts:** Through focus groups with the NW Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse, youth experiencing homelessness expressed a desire to have greater access to arts education and opportunities for self-expression. Through an Innovation Lab with the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, this initiative was shaped to invest in place-based arts experiences for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness, or who are considered at-risk, to develop stable, reliable centers where youth can connect with teaching artists as mentors, start to build work-force experience, and have access to information on housing services.



- **Other Engagements:** Innovation Team members also engaged in other City efforts to address homelessness. Team members provided process analysis support for the Emergency Operations Center activation, contributed to a broader community 100-Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness, and participated in King County's working group for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project.

OUR ROLE

Functional Capabilities

- Project Management
- Meeting Facilitation
- Coordination across departments

Specialized skillsets

- Outcome Measurement
- Human-Centered Design