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Innovative Public-Private Partnership Announces Fifth Round of Grants to Help Reduce Family Homelessness Statewide

Washington Families Fund awards more than \$3 million to nonprofit agencies across the state to provide housing paired with support services.

SEATTLE, WA, April 7, 2010—Today, the Washington Families Fund (WFF), a public-private partnership led by Building Changes, announced its fifth round of grant awards to agencies across the state. Grants totaling more than \$3 million will go to eight organizations working to move struggling families out of homelessness into housing, school, and economic stability in Clallam, Clark, King, Pacific, Snohomish, Thurston, and Walla Walla counties. These new awards come on the heels of the Fund's most recent report on five years of demonstrated success for homeless families served by Washington Families Fund programs.

The Washington Families Fund, which the State of Washington created in 2004 to fund services in supportive housing programs for families with children experiencing homelessness, is funded by state allocations and private investments. It represents a collaborative commitment by both the public and private sector to address the needs of homeless families in new and creative ways.

Washington Families Fund grantees work directly with families to address the causes of homelessness and help build stability and self-sufficiency through a variety of support programs. These programs combine affordable housing with comprehensive case management in employment and job training, parenting skills, and substance abuse and domestic violence counseling. "Combining immediate access to housing with coordinated support services and employment training improves stability and the likelihood that families will stay together during rough times," said Betsy Lieberman, Executive Director of Building Changes. "We are proud of the tireless effort these service providers put into their programs and the contribution they are making to their communities across Washington state."

According to data collected by the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs and reported by the National Center on Family Homelessness, more than 24,000 children experience homelessness each year in Washington state. Families with children are among the fastest growing segment of the homeless population nationwide. "Serving the needs of homeless families in this particularly burdensome economic climate remains a significant challenge," said Emily Nolan, Grantmaking and Evaluation Manager for Building Changes. "This past year alone, the Washington Families Fund received 34 applications for a total funding request of more than \$20 million."

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Five Years of Program Outcomes

In January 2010, Building Changes released new data detailing the outcomes and milestones achieved during the Washington Families Fund's first five years of operation from 2004 to 2009.

The data demonstrate how the Fund has met the needs of homeless families on several fronts:

- 73 percent of families completing WFF programs became permanently housed.
- Employment rose by 53 percent among heads of households.
- Income increased by 27 percent, from \$987/month to \$1,249/month.
- With housing stability, the number of children who remained stable in one school increased by 80 percent.

"The Washington Families Fund grant has helped us make employment a higher priority with our clients. More than 65 percent of our homeless clients find a job, but more importantly, these individuals are learning what it takes to keep that job," says current grantee Meghan Altimore, Director of Asset Building at Hopelink in King County.

To date, the Fund has awarded five- and ten-year grants totaling \$15.8 million to 43 nonprofit providers of 618 service-enriched housing units. These providers serve more than 1,000 families and 3,000 individuals who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Public-Private Partnership

In 2009, Washington Families Fund partners, including Governor Chris Gregoire, Building Changes, the executives of Pierce, Snohomish and King counties, the mayors of Tacoma, Everett and Seattle, and private funders, joined together to change the way we address family homelessness and committed to reducing the number of homeless families with children by 50 percent by 2019.

In the next ten years, Building Changes projects that the Washington Families Fund will permanently house 5,000 families. With the certainty of housing, 10,000 children will be enrolled in and will regularly attend school statewide. And 2,500 households will be gainfully employed.

"Long-term solutions to family homelessness require collaboration and trust between the public and private sectors working on this problem," said David Wertheimer, Senior Program Officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Building Changes has earned that trust and is demonstrating leadership in tackling this complex issue."

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Washington Families Fund 2009 Awards

[Blue Mountain Action Council](#) (Walla Walla, Walla Walla County)

Paine Court Supportive Housing

\$385,000

WFF funds will support case management and support services for families with multiple barriers to self-sufficiency.

Community Services Northwest (Vancouver, Clark County)

Family Housing Northwest Expansion

\$375,000

WFF funds will provide housing and case management support services for 10 homeless families that are experiencing co-occurring disorders and multiple barriers to self-sufficiency, including mental health and chemical dependency.

Community Youth Services (Olympia, Thurston County)

Employing Parents to Inspire Change

\$700,000

WFF funds will support a full-time employment specialist to focus on job development for young parents with children in 20 units of transitional housing.

Crisis Support Network (Raymond, Pacific County)

The Pacific Pearl

\$300,000

WFF funds will support a full-time advocate to assist domestic violence victims and their children who reside in 11 permanent supportive housing units.

Housing Hope (Everett, Snohomish County)

Avondale Park

\$301, 570

WFF funds will support case management, employment, life skills and related services for 14 homeless families.

Valley Cities Counseling & Consultation (Seattle, King County)

Families First

\$518,877

WFF funds will support services and case management for high-needs families in 20 units of permanent supportive housing.

West End Outreach Services (Forks, Clallam County)

Homestead II

\$334,500

WFF funds will support case management and support services for chronically homeless families in 10 units of permanent supportive housing.

YWCA (Seattle, King County)

\$168,000

WFF funds will support the placement of Housing and Employment Navigators at local Worksource and housing sites, who will focus on improving participation by WFF program families in employment and education programs.

About the Washington Families Fund

The Washington Families Fund was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2004 to ensure that homeless families with children have the supportive services linked to housing they need to move from crisis

to stability. To date, the Fund has awarded nearly \$16 million to 43 programs across Washington state dedicated to preventing and ending family homelessness. Public and private partners have contributed \$26 million, and more than 1,000 families including 1,860 children and 1,181 adults—have received help.

About Building Changes

Building Changes has supported individuals and families throughout Washington state for more than 20 years and led the Washington Families Fund since its creation in 2004. Guided by a belief that everyone deserves the opportunity for a home, a healthy life and a good job, the Seattle-based nonprofit unites public and private partners to create innovative solutions, delivering expert advice, grantmaking and advocacy for lasting change. Building Changes serves more than 8,000 individuals annually, including individuals and families with children who are experiencing homelessness and the housing and service providers who support them. For more information, visit BuildingChanges.org.