

# **A Plan to End Young Adult Homelessness in King County**

**May 2008**

This plan was developed as part of the Committee to End Homelessness' efforts to end homelessness in King County.



This plan was completed under contract with Building Changes. The following Building Changes staff contributed to this report:

**Mark Putnam**

*Manager of Community Initiatives*

Building Changes is a catalyst for ending homelessness. We address the economic and social conditions that adversely affect people's housing, health and job opportunities. We coalesce public and private resources to create lasting solutions, transforming the way people in need are served.



This plan was developed by a broad, diverse group of young adults, advocates, and other stakeholders who seek to end homelessness in King County. The Youth and Young Adult sub-committees of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) and the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH) provided guidance to this plan. Many people attended these sub-committee meetings and participated in additional regional meetings held throughout the county. In addition, young adults participated in focus groups as part of this planning process.

The co-chairs of each sub-committee are listed here:

Michelle Keating	YouthCare, Co-Chair CEHKC YYAC
Jim Theofelis	Mockingbird Society, Co-Chair CEHKC YYAC
Lee Colbert	YMCA of Greater Seattle, Co-Chair, SKCCH YYAC
Laura Pritchard	University District Service Providers Alliance, Co-Chair, SKCCH YYAC

A task force met monthly and guided the planning process. Their names are listed here:

Blue	Community representative (Seattle)
Chris	Community representative (S. County)
Jaclyn	Community representative (S. County)
Eric Anderson	City of Seattle Human Services
Laurie Becker	Healthcare for the Homeless, Public Health – Seattle & King County
Jim Blanchard	Auburn Youth Resources
Gretchen Bruce	Committee to End Homelessness
Dolores Carney	Community advocate
Sarah Cotton	UW Evans School
Marci Curtin	City of Seattle Human Services
Zach Davis	New Horizons Ministries
Sinan Demirel	ROOTS
Michelle Keating	YouthCare
Jennifer Martin (Chair)	YWCA of King & Snohomish Counties
Rita Nussli	New Horizons Ministries
Diane Pien	City of Seattle Human Services
Laura Pritchard	University District Service Providers Alliance
Susan Rogel	Friends of Youth
Brooke Scharnke	YMCA
Mary Shaw	United Way of King County
Elaine Simons	Peace on the Streets by Kids on the Streets
Debbie Thiele	King County Housing Authority

Finally, a small group of stakeholders who collectively identified a glaring need for housing and support services for homeless young adults in South King County worked over the course of the past year. Their goal was to develop an understanding amongst themselves and funders about the system and program gaps and to design a supportive housing program model that will address the priority needs in South King County. The members of this committee are listed here:

Jim Blanchard	Auburn Youth Resources
Dawn Cherne	Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation
Meg Hatlen	Public Health – Seattle & King County
Katalin Hausback	Auburn Youth Resources
Mike Heinisch	Kent Youth and Family Services
Heather Lofgrin	Enumclaw Youth and Family Services
Kate Naeseth	Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation
Debbie Thiele	King County Housing Authority
Terry Zimmerman	Children's Home Society of Washington

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Plan Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Countywide Planning Framework .....	5
<b>Understanding Young Adult Homelessness.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Causes and Risk Factors for Young Adult Homelessness .....	8
Homeless Young Adults in King County.....	8
<b>Promising Practices for Ending Young Adult Homelessness .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Model Housing and Services Continuum .....	13
<b>Housing and Services Resources and Gaps Summary .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Resources and Gaps.....	17
<b>Recommendations for Ending Young Adult Homelessness .....</b>	<b>31</b>
First Year (2008-2009) Priorities.....	31
Additional Strategies to Enhance System and Meet Regional Needs (2008-2014).....	35
Next Steps .....	37
<b>Appendix A: Proposed Pilot Program for South King County Homeless Young Adults .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Pilot Program .....	39



## Plan Summary

In King County, over 8,000 people are homeless at any given time, including approximately 1,000 young people between 18 and 25 years of age. As part of the efforts of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) to end homelessness by 2014, advocates, funders, and providers have developed a plan that provides a vision for ending young adult homelessness in our community. They have a shared understanding that ending homelessness among young adults will take enhanced housing and services from providers, new and sustainable resources from public and private funders, and a commitment to efficiency and coordination to ensure that we make the most of limited resources.

This plan was formed as a result of two main forces:

- First, advocates for homeless young adults sought a plan that communicated the distinct needs of this population and strategies for improving the existing system of housing and services.
- Secondly, private and public funders in our community sought a plan that provided an understanding homeless young adult needs and identified priorities for funding.

This countywide project has been guided by a 20-person task force including homeless young adults and has been coordinated with the CEHKC and Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless Youth and Young Adult committees.

## Why Homeless Young Adults Are So Important to Serve

Homelessness has serious consequences for youth and young adults. It is especially dangerous for youth and young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who do not have familial support, including those exiting foster care, and for those who have experienced trauma. Living in shelters or on the streets, unaccompanied homeless young adults are at a higher risk for physical and sexual assault or abuse and physical illness, including HIV/AIDS. Nationally, it is estimated that 5,000 unaccompanied youth and young adults die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.

Homeless youth and young adults often report that their family relationships have been strained by emotional abuse, neglect, alcoholism, addictions, or disapproval of their sexuality and/or sexual identity. **Abuse and neglect, and the resulting trauma, are common conditions for at-risk young adults.** These experiences have a profound effect on how young adults engage in services: some feel safer sleeping outside rather than putting him or herself under the monitoring of an adult. While the engagement process for any young adult takes longer than for most adults (and can be compared to chronically homeless adults), young adults who have experienced trauma, including those with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, require different approaches to address these root issues.

There are long-term implications of homelessness that homelessness planners should not ignore. A national study found that **among homeless adults who are 25 or older, 35 percent became homeless for the first time when they were between 12 and 24 years of age.** As we know from the extensive research that has been done on chronic homelessness, it is extremely expensive and shortsighted to not employ proven strategies for ending homelessness. A study by Martha Burt of The Urban Institute found that the longer the episode of homelessness as a youth or young adult,

the higher the risk that he or she will end up as a chronically homeless adult. Many homeless street young adults would meet HUD criteria for chronic homelessness if they were participating in the system.

## Causes and Risk Factors for Young Adult Homelessness

As with the adult population, young adults of color are disproportionately impacted by issues of poverty and resulting homelessness. Sexual minority status is also a powerful risk factor for young adult homelessness; disclosure to a parent or a parent's discovery of their status may lead to being thrown out or running away.

Some young adults become homeless upon being emancipated at or near age 18 from foster care, from the juvenile corrections system, or from other institutional care. For such young adults there may be few supportive family relationships still intact to which they can return, placing them at high risk for entering homelessness: a 1999 report by the GAO indicated that **between 25 percent and 40 percent of foster care youth became homeless** after emancipation, with a lack of a job and independent living skills cited as major causes of their homelessness.

Once homeless and living on the streets or in shelters, homeless young adults are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual assault or abuse—studies estimate that approximately **40-60 percent will experience physical abuse**, and between **17-36 percent will experience sexual abuse while homeless**. Due to their lack of financial resources, emotional vulnerability, and past traumatic experiences and resulting mental health, they are more likely than adults to become involved in 'survival sex' and/or prostitution and to contract HIV/AIDS.

Homeless youth and young adults are three times as likely as non-homeless youth to be pregnant, to have impregnated someone, or to already be a parent. This is often the result of having been evicted from the home because of the pregnancy or from prostitution or survival sex when already homeless, although the financial and emotional burden of caring for young children at such a young age is also a primary cause of homelessness for young adults. A national study found that **41 percent of homeless young adults 20-24 had their own children**.

While a crisis such as a serious illness, the loss of a job, or an unexpected pregnancy can precipitate homelessness for many people, young adults typically have fewer support resources in place to prevent such a consequence or to cope should it occur. These young individuals are more likely than other adults to have lower paying jobs with fewer benefits, are less likely to have health insurance or savings, and often lack a stable network of friends who are able to provide assistance.

## Homeless Young Adults and Housing Need in King County

Local indicators of the prevalence of young adult homelessness do not provide a complete picture, as existing data systems do not provide a single, unduplicated count. However, we do know that in 2007, ROOTS (U-District) turned away 1,038 young adults from its shelter (up nearly 400 percent from 2005), YouthCare served more than 1,100 young adults (unduplicated) in 2007 and has waiting lists for housing and employment services, and Healthcare for the Homeless Network served 709 young adults with health care services. It is clear from this data that there is a great need for housing and services for homeless young adults, and that the need is growing rather than declining.

A national study by Martha Burt (*Helping America's Homeless*) estimated that individuals aged 18 to 24 make up 12 percent of the adult homeless population. Based on these estimates and using the 2007 One Night Count of 8,439 homeless in King County, which is widely considered to be a conservative estimate of homeless prevalence, we can estimate that **there are at least 1,013 homeless young adults at a given time in our county.**

### **Housing Continuum Need Summary**

This plan demonstrates a great need for additional housing, combined with strong support services, for homeless young adults throughout King County. In order to make headway, existing programs must be supported and sustained, and new programs must be added to meet needs.

It is estimated that 595 young adults can be served on a given night in emergency, transitional, and stable housing in King County, half in housing that is dedicated with services tailored for young adults. These programs have demonstrated that they are in great demand, as occupancy rates are increasing, with most programs showing rates of 90 percent or higher. Emergency shelter utilization is at an all-time high, with ROOTS shelter and The Landing turning away young adults nearly every night. Between 2007 and 2008 One Night Counts, there was an increase of 80 young adults living in older adult and families emergency shelters and transitional housing.

The following table estimates the number of housing units, beds, and vouchers that homeless young adults are currently accessing, and the number who are homeless and not receiving assistance.

Young Adults Served in Existing Housing and Number Who Are Not Served

<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Young Adults in Young Adult-dedicated Housing (capacity at a given time)	295
Young Adults in Adult or Family Housing (capacity at a given time)*	300
<b>Sub-Total: Number of Young Adults Receiving Housing Assistance</b>	<b>595</b>
Young Adults who are Homeless (at a given time in 2008)	1,013
<b>Total GAP: Number of Homeless Young Adults Not Housed</b>	<b>418</b>

\* Approximate, based on average of 2007 and 2008 One Night Counts, emergency or transitional programs only.

The Committee to End Homelessness estimated in 2004 in its Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (*A Roof Over Every Bed*) that there was a need for an additional 300 permanent housing units or vouchers for young adults and youth (under age 18), combined, to be developed or created by 2014. To date, 8 new units of housing for young adults will have been developed through the first 4 years of the Ten-Year Plan, and 50 new vouchers have been created for young adults in existing housing. This means that the current production pace for new units or vouchers for homeless young adults is 14.5 per year (58 new units/vouchers divided by four years). If this pace were to continue, 87 new units or vouchers would be made available to homeless young adults by 2014.

**However, the need for permanent, or stable housing, is larger than originally estimated in the Ten-Year Plan, and there continues to be a need among homeless young adults for emergency and transitional housing options.** There is a need for an additional 300 units/vouchers of stable housing for young adults, 60 new transitional units/vouchers, and 58 new emergency or short-term beds, for a total of 418 new units, beds, or vouchers. These estimates utilize 2008 homeless count estimates, which may be inadequate in 2014. **Therefore, in order to meet current need, the “rate of production” needs to be increased to nearly 70 units/vouchers per year, a 500 percent increase over the current production rate.**

It is also important to reiterate that this increased production does not include estimates of need for homeless youth under 18. To date, no new housing for homeless youth under 18 has been added to the current inventory since 2004, the first year of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

## **Priority Strategies for Ending Young Adult Homelessness**

Over the past few months, King County homeless young adults and advocates have met and developed priority strategies for ending young adult homelessness. These strategies build on existing programs serving young adults in King County and have been tested here and in other jurisdictions across the country. They are suggested as priorities in collaboration with the broader initiatives of the community to end homelessness for all populations in our county.

Each region has identified one or two specific priorities for funding in the first year of the implementation of this plan. The following is a summary of the priorities for funding, by region, for 2008-2009.

### **East/North King County Regional Priorities:**

- ⇒ Scattered-site, stable, non-time-limited housing for 12 homeless young adults, including developmentally-appropriate support services
- ⇒ Emergency shelter for 20 homeless young adults, with drop-in center enriched with developmentally-appropriate support services for shelter residents and other East and North County homeless young adults

### **Seattle Regional Priorities:**

- ⇒ Scattered-site, non-time-limited stable housing for 25 homeless young adults, including developmentally-appropriate, ethnically- and community-based support services
- ⇒ Interim housing for 30 homeless young adults awaiting entry into transitional or non-time-limited stable housing, including short-term housing assistance and developmentally-appropriate, ethnically- and community-based support services

### **South King County Regional Priorities:**

- ⇒ Scattered-site, non-time-limited stable housing for 30 homeless young adults, with sites in multiple cities, and including developmentally-appropriate, ethnically- and community-based support services designed to build skills, support, motivate, and lead to self-sufficiency

## Introduction

As part of the efforts of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) to end homelessness in King County by 2015, young adults, advocates, funders, and providers have developed a plan that provides a vision for ending young adult homelessness in our community. They have a shared understanding that ending homelessness among young adults will take enhanced housing and services from providers, new and sustainable resources from public and private funders, and a commitment to efficiency and coordination to ensure that we make the most of limited resources.

The following plan provides a community-developed roadmap for the CEHKC Youth and Young Adult Committee and a guide for future funding of homeless young adults' (18-25 years of age) housing and services programs in King County. It has been guided by a task force including homeless young adults and has been coordinated with the CEHKC and Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH) Youth and Young Adult committees.

It is the expectation of the stakeholders who developed this plan that the Committee to End Homelessness in King County and local funders will use the recommendations set forth here to guide future funding and decision-making. In addition, it is recommended that the priority strategies outlined in this report be refined and re-evaluated by homeless young adults, their advocates and funders on at least an annual basis.

## Countywide Planning Framework

This plan was developed as a result of two main forces. First, advocates for homeless youth and young adults sought a plan that communicated the distinct needs of this population and strategies for improving the system of housing and services to address these needs. Secondly, private and public funders in our community sought a plan that provided them with a vision of a comprehensive continuum of housing and services and community-based priorities for funding. **It was agreed that a plan would be developed focusing only on the needs of young adults 18-25 years of age**, with an understanding that serving youth under 18 has distinctly separate issues with different strategies. It is the recommendation of the CEHKC YYA committee that a plan for serving youth under 18 is developed in 2008-2009.

The shared vision of providers and funders led to the following objectives for this planning process:

1. Identify promising practices locally and nationally and develop a vision for a comprehensive housing and services continuum that leads to housing stability and self-sufficiency outcomes for homeless young adults in King County.
2. Identify housing and services needs for homeless young adults that are not currently being met through existing resources for adults, families, or young adults specifically.
3. Build consensus for strategies to address the priority needs of homeless young adults by region (Seattle, South County, and East/North County), strategies leading to system-wide enhancements, and strategies for building on existing capacity among homeless young adult providers.

The planning process included a review of existing data and recent reports on youth and young adult homelessness in King County, a review of promising practices, peer-to-peer site visits in Washington and Oregon, and peer-to-peer conference calls with promising practices providers from New Jersey and California.

In addition, focus groups and surveys of young adults have been conducted and young adults have participated in meetings throughout this process, lending first-hand expertise about need and providing insightful ideas and strategies for improving the existing system. Stakeholder meetings were held throughout the process that focused on regional needs or particular service needs, such as employment. Notes from meetings held by relevant committees and funders were also utilized in this analysis, including United Way of King County and the City of Seattle Pro-Youth Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Programs.

### **South King County Planning**

In 2007, a group of South King County providers of housing and services to homeless youth and young adults began meeting to develop a strategy for addressing young adult homelessness. The group's objective was to increase funding for housing and services for homeless young adults in South County by increasing understanding and awareness of young adult homelessness in South King County among provider and funders. The process also served as a means of increasing the providers' knowledge of promising practices in serving this population.

The South King County group began meeting during the summer of 2007, prior to the countywide homeless young adult planning. Like the Seattle and East/North County region stakeholders, the South County group identified housing and service gaps and developed priorities for funding. In addition, however, the South County group developed a program design of a housing pilot for homeless young adults in South King County, a summary of which is included in detail in the appendices.

### **Homeless Young Adults Defined**

Throughout this report, you will find references to "homeless young adults". In simple terms, homeless young adults are defined in the following way:

**Young Adult:** An individual who is 18-25 years of age.

**Homeless:** The term "homeless" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homelessness for young adults can also include the following situations:

- Young adults who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Young adults who may be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or temporary housing, including shelter or transitional housing
- Young adults who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Young adults who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

Note: This definition is adapted from the Department of Education, which is the standard for youth and young adult homelessness planning, rather than the more limited Department of Housing and Urban Development definition.

## Understanding Young Adult Homelessness

Homelessness has serious consequences for youth and young adults. It is especially dangerous for youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who do not have familial support and for those who have experienced trauma. Living in shelters or on the streets, unaccompanied homeless young adults are at a higher risk for physical and sexual assault or abuse and physical illness, including HIV/AIDS. Nationally, it is estimated that 5,000 unaccompanied youth and young adults die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.

Homeless youth and young adults are also more likely to become involved in prostitution, to use and abuse drugs, and to engage in other dangerous and illegal behaviors. Young adults can turn to these behaviors to cope, self-medicate for their mental illness or trauma, or simply to survive. **Abuse and neglect, and the resulting trauma, are common conditions for at-risk young adults, and have a profound effect on how they engage in services:** some feel safer sleeping outside rather than putting him or herself under the monitoring of an adult. While the engagement process for any young adult takes longer than for most adults (and can be compared to chronically homeless adults), young adults who have experienced trauma, including those with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, require different approaches, including low-barrier support to address these root issues.

There are long-term implications of homelessness that homelessness planners should not ignore. A national study found that **among homeless adults who are 25 or older, 35 percent became homeless for the first time when they were between 12 and 24 years of age.**

As we know from the extensive research that has been done on **chronic homelessness**, it is extremely expensive and shortsighted to not employ proven strategies for ending homelessness, and this is particularly true for people who are young and not yet entrenched in the cycle of homelessness. A study by Martha Burt found that the longer the episode of homelessness as a youth or young adult, the higher the risk that he or she will end up as a chronically homeless adult. Many homeless street young adults would meet HUD criteria for chronic homelessness if they were participating in the system and good data was being gathered. A recent study by the California Research Bureau found that 40 percent of homeless young adults aged 17-24 said that their housing had been unstable for 1-4 years, and 25 percent had experienced unstable housing for 5+ years. This study also found that over 70 percent of homeless young adults have at least one mental health disorder, and that up to 75 percent of homeless young adults use drugs. This data, demonstrating high prevalence rates for unstable housing and behavioral health disabilities, supports anecdotal evidence in King County that indicates many young adults are chronically homeless.

Further, it is important to provide quality and appropriate services and housing for this population because numerous strategies have shown to be effective. The Corporation for Supportive Housing recently published a report, *New Homes, Brighter Futures*, that highlights promising young adult housing programs. One of these programs, First Place for Youth in Oakland, a scattered-site supportive housing and asset-building program for homeless young adults, found that participants are six times less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system or to become homeless and 50 percent more likely to be employed than similar young adults not participating in the program.

## Causes and Risk Factors for Young Adult Homelessness

Homeless youth and young adults often report that their family relationships have been strained by emotional abuse, neglect, alcoholism, addictions, or disapproval of their sexuality and/or sexual identity. Young adults become homeless for a wide variety of reasons, including being locked out or abandoned as youth or running away from home, thereby severing family support potential. As with the adult population, young adults of color are disproportionately impacted by issues of poverty and resulting homelessness. Sexual minority status is also a powerful risk factor for young adult homelessness; disclosure to a parent or a parent's discovery of their status may lead to being thrown out or running away.

Some young adults become homeless upon being emancipated at or near age 18 from foster care, from the juvenile corrections system, or from other institutional care. For such young adults, there may be few supportive family relationships still intact to which they can return, placing them at high risk for entering homelessness: a 1999 report by the GAO indicated that **between 25 percent and 40 percent of foster care youth became homeless** after emancipation, with a lack of a job and independent living skills cited as major causes of their homelessness.

Homeless youth and young adults are three times as likely as non-homeless to be pregnant, to have impregnated someone, or to already be a parent. This is often the result of having been evicted from the home because of the pregnancy or from survival sex when already homeless. Of young adults 20-24, a study by Martha Burt found that **41 percent were in a family living with their own children**.

Once homeless and living on the streets or in shelters, homeless young adults are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual assault or abuse—studies estimate that approximately **40-60 percent will experience physical abuse**, and between **17-36 percent will experience sexual abuse while homeless**. Due to their lack of financial resources, emotional vulnerability, and past traumatic experiences and resulting mental health, they are more likely than adults to become involved in 'survival sex' and/or prostitution.

While a crisis such as a serious illness or the loss of a job can precipitate homelessness for many people, young adults typically have fewer support resources in place to prevent such a consequence or to cope should it occur. These young individuals are more likely than other adults to have lower-paying jobs with fewer benefits, and are less likely to have health insurance, large savings, or a stable network of friends who are able to provide assistance in a crunch.

## Homeless Young Adults in King County

The National Alliance to End Homelessness ([www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)) cites research estimating that each year, approximately 1 million to 1.6 million young adults experience homelessness.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a national study by Martha Burt (*Helping America's Homeless*) estimated that individuals aged 18 to 24 make up 12 percent of the adult homeless population.

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Robertson and P. Toro, "Homeless Youth, Research, Intervention, and Policy, Practical Lessons," (presented at The National Symposium on Homelessness Research, Washington, DC, 1998).

Estimating the number of homeless young adults in King County is difficult. If an estimate is used based on the annual late January One Night Count, the data includes a count of homeless young adults who are in shelters or transitional housing, but not those who are in unsheltered or in other unstable housing situations. Agencies and multi-agency programs collect data on the homeless young adults they serve, yet combining their data and determining an unduplicated count has not yet been achieved. This type of count would also have limitations in that agencies cannot count young adults who have not been able to access services, who refuse to identify themselves, or who do not receive public assistance.

While there is not a perfect estimate of the prevalence of homelessness among young adults in King County, **Table 1** provides a summary of the information we do have, and concludes that approximately 1,013 young adults in our county are homeless at any given time during the year.

*Table 1:*  
**Estimate of Homeless Young Adults in King County**

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Data Explanation</b>	<b>Number of Homeless Young Adults</b>
2007 One Night Count	18-25 year olds in shelter or transitional housing on January 24, 2007 (one night data)	574
2007 Healthcare for the Homeless	18-25 year olds accessing health care at HCH sites (annual data)	709
2007 Pro-Youth (City of Seattle/HUD)	18-22 year olds in case management through Pro-Youth program (7 agencies, countywide, annual data)	388
<b>Burt, Aron, Lee (2001)</b>	<b>Limited, older, national study estimating that 12% of all homeless in King County (8,439 in 2008) were 18-25</b>	<b>1,013</b>

In addition to this data, we do know that in 2007, YouthCare serves more than 1,100 young adults (unduplicated) each year with its housing and services programs, and ROOTS turned away 1,038 young adults.

Stakeholders believe that each of the local data sources are inadequate and under-count the number of homeless young adults in King County. Therefore, it was agreed that the Burt, et. al. study estimate is the most realistic, and that **there are approximately 1,013 homeless young adults at a given time in our county**. National studies estimate that as many as 4 to 5 times as many people will be homeless in any year as are homeless on a given night; this would translate to about 4,000 to 5,000 homeless young adults annually in King County.

The Burt study also found that 14 percent of 18-19 year olds and 41 percent of 20-24 year olds were pregnant or parenting, and that approximately three-quarters of the homeless were from central cities, one-fifth from suburban areas and 5 percent from rural areas.

According to the Healthcare for the Homeless program and based on survey and service utilization data, it is estimated that about 65-75 percent of Seattle/King County's homeless youth are ages 18-20 years, with fewer than 5 percent under 15 years of age. Seattle is considered one of the main

“magnet cities” for runaway youth in the US. In addition, many first-generation immigrant youth in Seattle become homeless due to assimilation and culture clashes with their parents.

A more comprehensive survey of unsheltered homeless youth and young adults in King County is required that utilizes the skills of outreach workers, includes incentives for participation and protection from double-counting, and takes place twice per year (summer and winter) to account for population shifts.

## Promising Practices for Ending Young Adult Homelessness

During the course of this planning process, stakeholders have reviewed promising practice housing and services models and concepts for serving homeless young adults. As a result of these discussions, stakeholders have crafted a vision for the “ideal” continuum of housing and services for homeless young adults. The elements of this continuum are outlined over the next couple of pages. In addition, see the Appendices for links to promising practices examples.

The development of an ideal continuum of housing and services for homeless young adults incorporated research and analysis that has been developed locally and in other states. In particular, “Ten Essentials to Ending Youth Homelessness”, as developed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), has provided a framework for the development of the ideal continuum for King County.

The Ten Essentials include:

1. **Plan:** Community to have a plan that includes collaboration between many players (government programs, elected officials, homeless providers, etc.) and have made funding and implementation commitments to strategies
2. **Data:** Community has a homelessness management information system that can be analyzed to assess how long youth are homeless, what their needs are, what the causes of homelessness are, how people interact with mainstream systems of care, the effectiveness of interventions and the number of homeless youth
3. **Emergency Prevention:** Crisis counseling, family reunification services, rent assistance and landlord intervention
4. **Systems Prevention:** Discharge planning to include placement in stable housing for all young people being released from public institutions
5. **Outreach:** Outreach and engagement systems designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless youth to enter appropriate housing linked with appropriate services
6. **Housing Continuum:** Shelters and transitional housing facilities are organized to reduce or minimize the length of time youth remain homeless and the number of times they become homeless, based on outcomes data
7. **Comprehensive Services:** Direct access to public programs and services for health, mental health and substance use disorders, parenting classes, life skills training, etc.
8. **Development:** Providers engage youth in meaningful ways, shifting their role as a recipient of service to that of a leader and decision maker in program development, delivery and evaluation, organizational management and advocacy
9. **Permanent Housing:** Community to have a sufficient supply of permanent supportive housing for young people and an understanding of the definition of ‘permanency’ that takes into consideration the developmental stages of youth
10. **Income:** Community to assist youth to secure enough income to afford rent by rapidly linking them with employment and/or benefits; community connects youth to opportunities for increasing their incomes through educational and vocational programs

In developing a vision for a comprehensive continuum of housing and services to end young adult homelessness, stakeholders sought to identify the components of the young adult housing and services systems that resulted in stronger outcomes for young adults.

As a starting point, stakeholders identified the key outcomes they seek for young adults they serve, which include:

- Housing stability while accessing services and after leaving programs
- Development of soft skills, including building a network of relationships and natural supports, and hard skills, such as keeping regular preventative medical appointments and finding and keeping a job and housing
- Self-sufficiency to enable long-term stability and prevent future homelessness

Stakeholders also described how the existing young adult housing and services system tailors its programs to meet these outcomes. This discussion also leads to the question of the need for services specifically for homeless young adults. While no studies were found that compared outcomes for 18-25 year olds in young adult programs with 18-25 years olds in single adult or families programs, the consensus among local young adults, their advocates, and limited national research on this issue indicates that few young adults are at a developmental stage where they will have the maturity to succeed in programs geared towards adults only.

Homeless young adults and providers in King County noted that programs designed specifically for young adults provide benefits that adult providers are often not able to, such as:

- A platform for youth development into adulthood, with programmatic structures that allow for the ups and downs of adolescence and early adulthood.
- Safety from adults, as adult programs can be intimidating for many younger people, for physical and psychological reasons. In addition to safety concerns, young adults fear the loss of support that comes with a community of peers as well as a fear that they will join the adult homeless population.
- Success in engaging young adults in housing and services, as most young adults are reluctant to “join”, and are at a developmental stage where they seek control over decision-making and have distrust of authority and systems providing services. Those who have experienced abuse and/or participated in the child welfare and/or juvenile detention systems are more likely to feel distrust and less likely to engage in services and housing.
- Development of a community and family for those without natural supports. Many programs also include wrap-around services or other programs emphasizing the nurturing of natural supports and authentic relationships with service provider staff, volunteers, and peers. Programs “raise” the young adult by assisting them through to the next stage of their life (filling the gap that parents would fill) and helping them finish the process of growing up.
- Leadership development opportunities, such as with programs developed in partnership with young adults and focused on young adults interests, as a means of engagement. Programs that teach independent living skills and engage young adults in taking a first step toward achieving self-sufficiency and housing stability goals.

A primary, overarching concept to understand is development: for many, 18 is not the magic number in development. Young adults are in transition in most aspects of their lives, and there is large variance in their development progression. Some will feel ready and comfortable in an adult environment, while most will not.

## Model Housing and Services Continuum

Successful housing and services systems for homeless young adults include consistent characteristics and approaches. Promising practices research and interviews with providers in King County and other communities suggest that housing and services programs for homeless young adults should include the following characteristics, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2:**  
Model Housing and Services System Characteristics

<b>Flexible</b> intake, admission, and retention policies and processes that ensure low barriers to housing and services. This includes <b>coordination</b> among providers that allows for young adults to <b>easily transition</b> from one housing program to another according to their individual developmental course
<b>Geographic dispersion</b> of services to ensure access to services, housing, jobs, and support systems among young adults regardless of their neighborhood of origin
Regular <b>planning by providers and funders</b> based on data to ensure programs are efficient and prioritized, and open to change
<b>Systems coordination</b> between and among young adult, youth under 18, foster care, criminal justice, educational, and homeless adult systems
Programs are based in communities and by providers that reflect the <b>diversity</b> of young adults in King County, including race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation
A learning system that <b>trains and retains staff</b> and pays competitive wages
Programs provide <b>ongoing opportunities for young adults</b> to shape program design, evaluate effectiveness of services, and provide feedback on key operational issues

Model program approaches for serving homeless young adults have been developed by King County young adults and providers and a review of promising practices locally and nationally. These approaches should guide the development and funding of new programs and for making enhancements to existing programs.

**Homelessness Prevention:** Two paths need to be considered in preventing homelessness among homeless young adults: how do we prevent young adults from becoming homeless for the first time and how do we prevent them from joining the adult or chronically homeless population? Prevention strategies must involve multiple systems, including foster care, juvenile detention, adult criminal justice, and schools, utilize outreach to access and inform young adults of the services available to them, and ensure that assessment and triage includes family reunification options.

**Outreach and Engagement:** Young adults are often reluctant to access services, or are otherwise ineligible for services for a variety of reasons, including past traumatic experiences with authority figures. Many do not identify as homeless and thus have limited knowledge of and access to services. Drop-in centers, health clinics, and street outreach that can identify with and meet young adults where they are at are essential.

**Comprehensive Services Continuum:** Many homeless young adults have intensive service needs. Services must be flexible, as control and choice are important to young adults. Typically, for many young adults, leaving home allows for a sense of power and control. Such feelings are not easily given up when entering a new program. The needs of young adults change quickly, and programs need to be responsive to meet those needs as they emerge in order to engage and retain young adults in services. Services need to be community- and ethnically based and developed. The range of services should include the following service types:

- Case management, assistance and advocacy in accessing public benefits for which they are eligible, life skills training and practice, relationships with at least one responsible, trustworthy adult mentor, consistent emotional support, and social and recreational opportunities
- Health services, including medical, dental, and preventative health services, including STD and contraception options, and access to appropriate services for mental health and chemical dependency

**Education and Employment Services Continuum:** Education and employment are essential components to ending young adult homelessness. For many, attaining a GED may be a first step, as half of homeless young adults have less than a high school degree. Engagement in educational and employment opportunities is the first step, and many need support with tuition costs and services to help them stay within career pathways. Many young adults simply want to earn a paycheck, yet have no job history, and need pre-employment readiness and job placement services. Apprenticeships and training, particularly vocational certificates or other post-secondary credentials, are essential to the goal of attaining living-wage jobs. Education and employment programs should include:

- Educational services, including achieving high school diploma or GED, utilizing ABE or ESL programming, and achieving post-secondary training, certificates, or degrees
- Employment services, including outreach and engagement, case management, employment readiness training, job skill development, job training, and placement and retention services

**Housing Services Continuum:** Housing for young people, homeless or otherwise, is, by nature, transitional. Most young adults in their late teens and early to mid-twenties are housed in college dormitories, shared or studio apartments, or are continuing to live at home. Very few have decent or even existent rental histories. The design of housing for homeless young adults should focus on stability, safety, and affordability. The goals of any housing model for this population should be placement in safe, stable housing and preparation for future independent housing.

A housing continuum is defined as a range of forms of housing that allows young adults to transition from one housing program to another according to their individual developmental path. The following graphic demonstrates the types of housing assistance that are part of this continuum, including a housing type (Interim Housing), which is a priority of the Seattle region (see p. 33), that integrates emergency and transitional housing elements.

***“Steps to Stability” Housing Continuum***

Emergency Housing→	Interim Housing→	Transitional Housing→	Stable Housing
<i>Homelessness</i>	<i>Housing skill-building</i>	<i>Housing stability</i>	<i>Independence</i>

The range of programs should include the following housing types:

- Emergency housing assistance is one-time or very short-term assistance to address an immediate housing crisis—often for people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The primary goal of emergency assistance is to solve the immediate housing crisis and can include shelter, safe havens, emergency financial assistance, and related services.
- Transitional housing assistance is of limited duration—usually from 1 to 2 years—and is intended to help people transition from a housing crisis into a permanent, stable housing situation. Its goal is to provide temporary, safe housing and services to help households develop the skills and locate the ongoing resources they need to succeed in permanent housing. Additionally, people with no or poor rental history can build a positive rental history while in transitional housing, increasing their access to permanent housing. Transitional housing assistance programs can be scattered-site, but most often are facility-based with intensive, mandatory supportive service programs.
- Stable housing assistance (non-time-limited housing): The goal of stable housing assistance is to create safe, decent and stable housing opportunities that do not include tenancy time limits or expectations of permanency. Tenants are provided with apartments either in a single-site or scattered, and are provided with rental assistance. This model includes mandatory services, including case management and independent living skills training. Many young adults require more intensive support services, including mental health and/or chemical dependency services geared to young adults, among other services. Employment and education services are essential to furthering self-sufficiency and independence. Stable housing assistance for homeless young adults should include the following options:
  - Single-site, supportive housing with varying levels of support services designed to help people who need to build skills and need assistance to live independently, provided on an ongoing basis.
  - Scattered-site, supportive housing with varying levels of services. Staff is not available on site, but tenants are part of a program and receive case management services at a minimum. Services are provided in tenant apartments and/or at agency locations. Tenants receive rental assistance, with options including deep subsidies (tenant pays percentage of income, usually 30 percent) and shallow rent subsidies (tenant receives a smaller, fixed amount of rent assistance).
- Programs to assist young adults with accessing and maintaining private market housing, including landlord liaisons, especially for those with no rental or job histories, criminal histories, credit issues, no co-signers, etc.

#### **Stable Housing**

This type of housing assistance, which is non-time limited, is often called “permanent supportive housing”. However, for young adults, we are calling it stable housing to differentiate the expectation of permanent tenancy, and to emphasize the outcome of housing stability rather than the outcome of long-term tenancy in the program.



## Housing and Services Resources and Gaps Summary

During the course of this planning process, research has been conducted to identify the housing and services needs of homeless young adults in King County at the program and system levels. As a basis to evaluating and prioritizing these needs, research was conducted on promising practice housing and services models and concepts for serving this population and on-site and phone meetings were held with peer providers in other communities, as summarized in the previous section.

In addition, King County providers and young adults who are focused on improving services and housing for this population have reflected on the housing and service needs of homeless young adults previously, through various community processes over the past few years, formal and informal. These processes included important findings, which have been integrated with information gathered in 2008. Information sources for this summary include:

- *It Takes More Than Shelter Report* (2000)
- *Street Youth Task Force* (2002)
- CEH YYA Committee Retreat (2006)
- CEH YYA Committee Concept Papers (2006)
- Pro-Youth Focus Groups and Provider Meetings (2007)
- *CTED State Report on Youth and Young Adult Homelessness*, including King County young adult focus group and stakeholder meetings (2007)
- *Expanding the Continuum for Homeless Young Adults* (Anna Strahan/UWKC) (2007)
- CEH Prevention Sub-Committee (2008)
- CEH YYA Committee Platform Paper (2008)
- CAC Homeless Young Adult Focus Group (March 2008)
- Various stakeholder interviews and meetings conducted for this report, including meetings with homeless young adults, case managers, directors, funders, and others in each region of King County (2007-2008)

As described in the previous section, a "Model Continuum" has been envisioned by King County stakeholders, utilizing the "Ten Essentials to Ending Youth Homelessness" as a guide. The next section summarizes existing resources, compares these resources to the Model Continuum, and identifies gaps in the existing continuum.

### Resources and Gaps

The following table demonstrates the characteristics of a "model housing and services continuum", and provides analysis of how King County measures up to the model.

**Table 3:**  
Comparison of King County to Model Housing and Services Continuum Characteristics

Model Continuum Characteristic	Are We Doing Well, Do We Need to Improve, or is it Mixed?
Regular <b>planning by providers and funders</b> based on data to ensure programs are efficient and prioritized, and open to change	↑ <b>Doing Well:</b> Agencies are meeting regularly to discuss priorities via the CEHKC YYA Committee. Funders such as United Way, the City of Seattle, King County Housing Authority, Raynier Institute & Foundation, and others are involved in these meetings and actively working with providers to identify solutions. This is an area where improvement has been made that needs to be supported and continued.
<b>Flexible</b> intake, admission, and retention policies and processes that ensure low barriers to housing and services. This includes <b>coordination</b> among providers that allows for young adults to <b>easily transition</b> from one housing program to another according to their individual developmental course	↔ <b>Mixed:</b> Individual agencies meet clients where they are, and lower barriers to entry to ensure engagement. Intake processes are streamlined. Coalitions such as Pro-Youth and the United Way wrap-around program provide structure for collaboration. Agencies need to find ways to communicate more and ensure easy transition by young adults to other agencies if they are not the right fit for their services. Agencies need to improve information-sharing about programs.
<b>Systems coordination</b> between and among young adult, youth under 18, foster care, criminal justice, educational, and homeless adult systems	↔ <b>Mixed:</b> Coordination among these systems is good, particularly for those agencies that serve multiple populations (youth, young adults, older adults). However, coordination is often based on individual relationships and stronger linkages will improve young adult's outcomes. A new program called MedRest, a collaboration between many community partners including University of Washington, YouthCare and Group Health Foundation, is an example of a young adult program linking closely with the adult system; the program provides overnight supervision for ill or injured young adults, then transitions them to the Seattle-King County Medical Respite program and links them with housing and services.
Programs provide <b>ongoing opportunities for young adults</b> to shape program design, evaluate effectiveness of services, and provide feedback on key operational issues	↔ <b>Mixed:</b> Programs incorporate opportunities for feedback by young adult clients, including the SKCCH YYA annual summit. However, young adults are unclear how the feedback is incorporated into program design or improvements. Opportunities for leadership in homeless planning and other arenas should be nurtured.
Programs are based in communities and by providers that reflect the <b>diversity</b> of young adults in King County, including race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation	↓ <b>Needs Improvement:</b> Lambert House, Therapeutic Health Services/Central Youth and Family Services, YMCA, United Indians, and YouthCare (Isis House for LGBTQ), among other providers, serve homeless young adults from underserved communities. However, few providers are minority-based. Services are accessed less frequently by communities of color, which may be due to a lack of services in the areas in which many minorities reside.
A learning system that <b>trains and retains staff</b> and pays competitive wages	↓ <b>Needs Improvement:</b> More training opportunities are needed for youth and young adult staff. Retention strategies need to be evaluated and implemented. Staff turnover is difficult for young adults who have built trusting relationships with these adults. Retention strategies need to be evaluated and implemented.
<b>Geographic dispersion</b> of services to ensure access to services, housing, jobs, and support systems among young adults regardless of their neighborhood of origin	↓ <b>Needs Improvement:</b> Housing and services providers exist throughout the county, yet many resources are located in central Seattle. Young adults from throughout the county seek the more visible service providers in Seattle. There are housing and services gaps in each part of the County, but particularly in South County.

The following is a summary analysis of existing resources in King County serving homeless young adults, including regional variances, and analysis of critical gaps in housing and services, for the following key components of a “model housing and services continuum”:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Outreach and Engagement
- Comprehensive Services Continuum
- Housing Services Continuum
- Education and Employment Services Continuum

### **Homelessness Prevention**

The CEHKC has just developed a homelessness prevention plan. This plan identifies an array of resources to prevent homelessness and strategies for increasing resources and further preventing homelessness. Resources in King County include information referral, emergency financial assistance (for rent and other prevention activities), tenant rights education and mitigation, case management, financial stability and asset building services, and long-term self-sufficiency programs.

Some programs, such as the Foster Youth Individual Development Account (IDA) program pilot, are working to prevent homelessness among homeless young adults. However, many programs are more generally available to anyone in need. Engagement strategies are needed, such as providing set-asides targeting homeless young adults and enhanced coordination between adult and youth/young adult providers to ensure young adults are provided with services to prevent homelessness.

For those in housing, **landlord liaison services** are needed to assist young adult tenants in maintaining their housing and preventing homelessness. This includes supporting tenants with ongoing case management after housing placement to ensure successful tenancy and building trust with landlords such that they know they can get results by contacting the service provider to work out problems. The YWCA will lead a county-wide landlord liaison program to be implemented in 2008. Young adult providers interested in accessing these services for their clients will be able to do so by signing an MOU with the YWCA. In addition, a new collaborative in East County among homeless providers will enhance landlord relationships and will begin in 2008.

#### **Homeless Prevention: KEY NEEDS**

1. Landlord liaison services provided by young adult service providers (System-wide)
2. Emergency financial assistance, including set-asides for young adults (System-wide)
3. Enhanced linkages to existing resources (System-wide)
4. Enhanced communication among systems (foster care, juvenile justice, adult homeless, and education) (System-wide)
5. Increased funding for family reconciliation services

Enhanced coordination is also needed between the **school district** homeless liaisons and service providers, to improve ability to work pro-actively to prevent homelessness. Young adults may be in secondary education, either in high school or in alternative schools, after turning 18, and in many cases may be living on their own or couch-surfing with friends. School districts are a good place to do in-reach and ensure that older students are aware of services.

For those exiting the **foster care system** at the age of 18 and those young adults **exiting the juvenile justice system**, there are sometimes few options. For those exiting the foster care system, housing and services exist and connections between the child welfare system and these providers are improving. In addition, new programs like the Independent Youth Housing Program, a CTED pilot, show promise, but King County providers have not received funding from this program. Those exiting juvenile justice are sometimes kept in costly institutions because of a lack of housing options. Stronger connections are needed with juvenile justice and the adult criminal justice system to provide housing and employment opportunities for these young adults, who go from being "locked up" to being "locked out."

### **Outreach and Engagement**

Outreach and engagement systems are designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless youth to enter appropriate housing linked with appropriate services. For those who have recently become homeless or are at-risk, **outreach and engagement opportunities** are essential. Accessing and engaging homeless young adults takes effort and patience, and the mistrust of authority by many means it will not be a linear process in establishing a trusting relationship with a young adult. To be successful, this also requires making referrals to the best housing and service options.

Drop-in centers, health clinics, emergency shelters, street outreach, and in-reach to other service systems (adult homeless, schools, foster care, criminal justice) all serve as engagement opportunities, and are in place in King County. Friends of Youth (East and North), Auburn Youth Resources (South County), and a number of providers in Seattle provide low-barrier opportunities to engage in services. These range from street outreach by FOY and AYR to primary care health clinics for young adults on Capitol Hill and Wallingford (Healthcare for the Homeless program). YouthCare, through its Orion Center, a drop-in center, and its street outreach in the U-District, Capitol Hill, and downtown, offers a variety of ways for youth to engage in housing and services, including particular focuses on youth offenders and those living with HIV/AIDS. Peace on the Streets by Kids on the Streets, on Capitol Hill, conducts outreach and referrals. University District Youth Center in the U-District, the YMCA's The Center (South Seattle), and New Horizons, in downtown Seattle, operate drop-in centers. New Horizons conducts extensive street outreach services, including a particular emphasis on young women involved in the sex-industry, and the 45<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic also conducts street outreach in Seattle.

#### **Outreach and Engagement: KEY NEEDS**

1. Increased street outreach (System-wide)
2. Drop-in centers in various locations throughout County (South, East/North)
3. Enhanced information sharing systems for young adults and their advocates (System-wide)

However, these services are insufficiently funded and are not available in each region of the county. In particular, South County, East/North County, and south Seattle have more limited outreach and engagement services. Auburn Youth Resources (South) and Friends of Youth (East/North) struggle to stretch limited staff over large geographic areas. South, East/North County do not have drop-in centers. East County, at The Landing emergency shelter operated by Friends of Youth, has health care assistance one day per week, while South County young adults must come to Seattle for their health care needs.

Another key to engagement is ensuring that **information about programs** is easily accessible to homeless young adults. Currently, information is inconsistently available to homeless young adults, based on where they live in the county, the agency they seek services from, and their case manager's knowledge. A list of housing programs and drop-in centers is updated and distributed to agencies periodically. Community-wide resource directories, including 211, are valuable, but often youth and young adults are not aware of this resource.

### **Comprehensive Services**

**A broad range of services** are needed that are flexible and do not exclude those young adults who are not in housing. There are numerous service providers in King County serving young adults, including agencies that are exclusively focused on serving homeless young adults. In addition, homeless young adults access services through programs for low-income adults, homeless adults and families, at-risk young adults, and programs serving both homeless youth and young adults. These and other programs are important, yet promising practices research demonstrates that most young adults are most appropriately served by services that are specifically tailored for the developmental needs of young adults. Services that are community- and ethnically based will increase utilization of services, particularly for those who are sexual minorities, refugees or immigrants, and communities of color.

**Case management services** are essential and are provided by various homeless young adult providers, including Pro-Youth providers throughout the County. However, in South County, there is limited case management staff for this population. Auburn Youth Resources, however, is developing a wrap-around services program in South County in collaboration with the University District Youth Center and has outreach staff that is able to provide limited case management.

**Wrap-around services** have shown promise in serving at-risk young adults, and the United Way of King County is piloting a program and will assess the efficacy of the wrap-around model in serving homeless young adults. In addition, mentorship programs and community services programs have shown effectiveness in the successful development of young adults and should be built upon. Transportation and child care resources are needed to support young adults to go to service appointments, school, and/or work.

#### **Comprehensive Services Continuum: KEY NEEDS**

1. Community- and ethnically based services (county-wide)
2. Monitor wrap-around model results and consider for expansion (county-wide)
3. Expanded access to primary health care, dental care, and mental health and chemical dependency treatment
  - a. East/North: hygiene center, dental care, MH/CD
  - b. Seattle: restorative dental care, MH/CD
  - c. South County: primary health clinic, dental care, MH/CD
4. Coordinated entry to services, including a common assessment tool
5. Coordination, information sharing, and training for providers

**Health services** are key engagement and service portals. There are two primary care clinics specifically for homeless youth under 24 years. One clinic is located in Wallingford (45th Street Homeless Youth Clinic/Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers), and the other is located in

Capitol Hill (Country Doctor Homeless Youth Clinic/University of Washington Adolescent Medicine), and health care is also provided once a week in East County at The Landing. There is not a health clinic for homeless young adults in South County. The Seattle clinics offer a wide range of on-site health and supportive services including allopathic care, chemical dependency counseling, mental health services, dental care, HIV/AIDS testing and follow-up care, acupuncture, naturopathy, and health education. Health-related needs include low-barrier access to mental health and chemical dependency treatment and additional capacity to provide dental care for young adults. In addition, access to health insurance could be greatly enhanced by extending eligibility to the Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to those up to age 23, as well extending eligibility for all dependents under private coverage through age 23; and ensuring that colleges and universities offer affordable health insurance coverage to both full-time and part-time students.

There is not currently a common mechanism, used across agencies serving homeless young adults, for identifying the level or type of services needed by a client at intake and at regular intervals. A **common assessment tool** should be developed for use across agencies to identify level of service need and appropriate referral, including assessment of family reunification potential. Agencies will be able to assess their ability to serve each client, and make referrals to agencies that can address each client's needs adequately. A coordinated entry system should result in a more efficient system that limits unnecessary duplication of services and improves inter-agency coordination and support. Coordinated entry will also enable providers to assess whether a young adult can be appropriately served by adult housing and services programs. Young adult providers should coordinate their efforts in this area with the *CEHKC Coordinated Entry Project*, due to be implemented in 2008-2009. Advocates for homeless single adults and families have begun developing common assessment tools for these populations; young adult providers should also develop a tool in the coming year.

In addition, the existing **service coordination and training system** should be assessed. The Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless and the Committee to End Homelessness Youth and Young Adult committees have begun discussions about how to coordinate each committee's respective activities. An overarching objective for the committees should be to improve coordination, information sharing, and training opportunities among service providers. This should include regular forums for networking among case managers about new programs and emerging issues; a forum for young adults to engage in meaningful ways in program development, evaluation, and advocacy; and shared training opportunities for new and existing staff that will serve to build capacity and improve retention of staff serving young adults.

### **Education and Employment Services Continuum**

Young adults, aged 18 to 25, are at a life stage where they are beginning to learn how to live independently. Most adults must work in order to make it in our society, and most people, including young adults, want to earn money and build assets. For homeless and at-risk young adults, school and work are important building blocks for addressing their housing instability.

As with housing and comprehensive services, a continuum of educational and employment services are needed to meet the range of homeless young adults needing assistance to build self-sufficiency. A strong continuum includes the participation of three "systems" and includes the following components:

- Educational system, including secondary schools (high school, alternative schools, GED, and high school technical/vocational education) and post-secondary schools (community colleges, 4-year colleges, and community college technical/vocational education)
- Social services system, including outreach and engagement, case management, mental health and substance use treatment, and housing
- Workforce development system, including employment readiness, job skill development, job training, job placement, job retention, and asset building.

The existing continuum of educational and employment services for homeless young adults is strong. Providers such as YouthCare (Orion Center), YWCA (Working Zone), Seattle Youth Garden Works, New Horizons, Street Youth Ministries, Mockingbird Society, Peace on the Streets by Kids on the Streets, YMCA (The Center), and Friends of Youth provide a range of services. Young adults can access an array of education and employment services at the Orion Center, including an alternative school, pre-employment services (through Working Zone), training, and linkages to community college through the Gates Education Initiative. However, many young adults are turned away from services, particularly training; recently, YouthCare had to hold a lottery for young adults who had successfully completed their pre-training program, and had to turn away two eligible applicants for each client they could accept, due to a lack of adequate funding.

Some young adults can and do participate in adult employment services. However, resources are not currently sufficient to meet need. Young adults indicate that they are very interested in working and want low-barrier access to job training, employment opportunities, and the support services needed to maintain employment and move toward greater economic self-sufficiency.

There is a lack of employment services for young adults in East/North County and South County. In East/North County, Friends of Youth is seeking to develop new employment programs integrated with housing. In South County, YouthSource and Multi-Service Center, among other providers, are resources, yet homeless young adults report difficulty accessing their services as these programs do not specifically tailor services to homeless young adults.

A new program, coordinated by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, will provide job skills and training for young ex-offenders re-entering society as well as at-risk young adults. Services are accessible through YouthSource (Renton), Orion Center (Seattle), and Multi-Service Center (Federal Way), however, this program has received funding for only eighteen months from the U.S. Department of Labor.

<p><b><u>Education and Employment Services</u></b>  <b><u>Continuum: KEY NEEDS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased opportunities for young adults to engage in educational and employment at each housing and services portal and at entry points not operated by homeless young adult providers, such as YouthSource (county-wide).</li> <li>2. Expanded funding for training for homeless young adults through existing programs and the new DOL youth offender grant.</li> <li>3. Partner with Workforce Education Collaborative to ensure inclusion of homeless young adults in post-secondary credentialing programs.</li> <li>4. Coordination, information sharing, and training for providers.</li> </ol>
--

A particular focus is needed to strengthen linkages among providers to existing services for young adults across the county and ensuring that programs are age-appropriate and community- and ethnically based and developed. Some of these connections are working; Seattle Education Access provides resources for marginalized young adults who are interested in attending college, and the Gates Education Initiative, at Orion Center, is a resource to those young adults who are interested in attending college. These programs provide these linkages, including access to Opportunity Grants, which pay for tuition and other education-related expenses.

However, further emphasis on connections to post-secondary educational opportunities is needed to increase opportunities for young adults across the county. The employment services programs targeting young adults should engage with the Workforce Education Collaborative and participate in this new initiative's activities. The collaborative seeks to increase the number of adults 18 to 54 years of age who achieve a post-secondary credential. The collaborative proposes that existing young adult employment programs should be credential-based so that a student could earn credits that could be applied later if they were to follow a similar career pathway at a community college. This is currently happening with some programs, but not others.

In addition, transportation and childcare, among other support services, are essential support services that enable a young adult to find and keep a job.

### **Housing Services Continuum**

King County has two **emergency shelters** for homeless young adults: ROOTS, in the U-District, with a maximum capacity of 25 young adults, and The Landing, in Bellevue, with a capacity of 12 that is sometimes stretched to 15. The shelters are often at capacity, meaning that each night young adults are turned away to fend for themselves on the streets or seek shelter at adult facilities. One young woman in a focus group noted: **“I just want to know that I have a place to sleep and shower so that I can go to work the next day.”**

In the 2008 One Night Count, 41 young adults were in young adult shelters, including 37 males, meaning both shelters were at capacity. An additional 134 young adults, including 78 females, were in single adult or families shelters on that night. This is a large increase over 2007, when 80 young adults were counted in adult or families shelters.

In addition, ROOTS turned away 217 young adults in 2005, 595 in 2006, and 1,038 young adults in 2007 due to its 25-person capacity. From 2005 to 2007, there has been a 478 percent increase in shelter turn-aways at ROOTS. The Landing, operated by Friends of Youth, also frequently exceeds its 12-person capacity.

#### **Housing Continuum (Emergency Housing): KEY NEEDS**

1. Sustain existing emergency shelter programs
2. Increased capacity to provide emergency housing with services in communities where young adults live
  - a. East/North: capacity for 8 additional young adults to be served per night
  - b. Seattle: capacity for 30 additional young adults to be served per night
  - c. South: capacity for 20 additional young adults to be served per night
3. Stronger service linkages within emergency housing to ensure engagement in housing and services to end homelessness (county-wide)

Emergency housing and services are needed in locations where young adults are living, including various neighborhoods throughout Seattle (Downtown/Westlake, Capitol Hill, Central District, Rainier Valley, West Seattle, White Center, and U-District), the Eastside, and in South King County. There is also a need to build stronger linkages to employment, education, support services and long-term housing options for those with emergent housing needs. While the housing must remain low barrier, the opportunity to engage the young adults in housing and service planning is present and needs to be exploited. Transportation assistance between the Seattle and Eastside shelters, and for South County young adults to get to the existing shelters, is needed.

Alternative options for addressing the need for emergency housing should be considered, such as safe havens and other emergency housing options that provide young adults with a place to keep their things and know they have a safe place to sleep and provide an opportunity for engagement in services and a path out of homelessness.

**Transitional housing (scattered-site and single-site)** is service-enriched housing with housing assistance for up to 2 years targeted to meet the developmental needs of young adults who have multiple barriers to self-sufficiency and prepare the young adults to move into stable housing. These young adults may have severe mental illness and/or active substance use issues. Young adults benefit from programs that include services programs that are crafted to address their specific developmental needs. Support services are essential for young adults in transitional housing and lead to positive outcomes, including self-sufficiency and housing stability.

<p><b>Housing Continuum (Transitional Housing): KEY NEEDS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sustain existing transitional housing programs and enhance level of services.</li><li>2. Expand existing program capacity to meet existing and future need.</li></ol>
--

There are 177 units of transitional housing in the county. Programs include those for young adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) (ISIS House - YouthCare), those with mental illness (Cedar House – Community Psychiatric Clinic and others), foster care graduates (YMCA shared homes in West Seattle and Central Area), youth of color (United Indians Youth Home in North Seattle), and those ready for more independence (Straley House – Youthcare). About two-thirds of these programs are in Seattle while one-quarter are in East/North County. Only 17 units, or 10 percent, are in South County. These programs are in great demand; for example, there are 50 young adults on wait lists for YouthCare housing programs on average, and the programs operate at more than 90 percent occupancy. These programs require stable funding for operating and support services to ensure sustainability.

In addition to facility-based programs, the YMCA has recently initiated a transitional county-wide shallow-rent subsidy program that provides \$200 per month in rent for up to one year. This program should be monitored to determine if there is more need than the current capacity (25 young adults). It is anticipated that additional need for this program exists.

On the night of the 2008 One Night Count, there were 203 young adults living in transitional housing for single adults and families. This is an increase from 2007, when 176 young adults were living in such programs.

**Stable housing (scattered-site and single-site)** is a significant need for many young adults. While transitional housing allows for service providers to work with tenants for a limited period of time to prepare young adults for self-sufficiency, other young adults need a longer period of time to engage in services and build the skills needed to live and work independently. Stable housing programs are non-time-limited and include housing assistance with intensive support services that are developmentally appropriate.

Currently, there are programs that are providing young adults with rental assistance that is integrated into the community, also called “tenant-based” or “scattered”, and other programs with housing units that are “program-based” or “single-site”, meaning a young adult needs to live in that particular building in order to receive housing assistance. Both models need further expansion throughout the county.

In Seattle, the YMCA, Church Council of Greater Seattle, Catholic Community Services, and Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) operate stable housing programs, with a total capacity of 34, about half of which are program-based at a single site.

In East/North County, by the end of 2008, Friends of Youth will have added 12 units of stable housing to the overall inventory. Six of these units are for young families, and 6 are for single adults. In addition, the YMCA has a county-wide rental assistance voucher program (Therapeutic Housing Program), of which about 5 can be expected to live in East or North County. These vouchers are for people with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues and can be used anywhere outside of Seattle within the County.

In South County, there are no stable, non-time-limited single-site housing programs. In addition, the only scattered-site housing assistance that is the YMCA Therapeutic Housing Program for those with mental illness and/or substance use issues. Up to ten of these vouchers may be used in South County.

In addition, some young adults can be served by the adult and families housing providers, and some of the need for independent housing for young adults may be able to be met through partnerships among young adult and adult homeless housing and service providers. However, the services provided to the young adults must be tailored for this population’s unique developmental needs. Landlord liaison services are also needed for young adults who are in housing to support good tenancy and prevent evictions.

#### **Stable Housing**

This type of housing assistance is often called “permanent supportive housing”. However, for young adults, we are calling it stable housing to differentiate the expectation of permanent tenancy. Homeless young adults are inherently in transition. Long-term tenancy outcomes are insufficient measures of success. Rather, young adults require non-time-limited support to build skills that enable them to leave the program, and, if needed, to return to the program if they require additional support before succeeding independently.

#### **Housing Continuum (Stable Housing): KEY NEEDS**

1. Sustain existing stable housing and services
2. Increased stable housing capacity in communities where young adults live, either in single-site or scattered-sites, with services
  - a. East/North: capacity for 65 additional young adults to be served per night
  - b. Seattle: capacity for 125 additional young adults to be served per night
  - c. South: capacity for 110 additional young adults to be served per night

### Existing Housing Inventory

It is estimated that 595 young adults can be served on a given night in emergency, transitional, and stable housing in King County, half in housing that is dedicated with services tailored for young adults. These programs have demonstrated that they are in great demand, as occupancy rates are increasing, with most programs showing rates of 90 percent or higher. Emergency shelter utilization is at an all-time high, with ROOTS shelter and The Landing turning away young adults nearly every night.

The following table summarizes the existing housing inventory in King County for homeless young adults.

**Table 4:**  
Housing Continuum Inventory, by Region and Housing Type (2008)

Housing Type	East/North County	Seattle	South County	Total Units/Beds/ Vouchers (2008)
Emergency Housing*	12	25	0	37
Transitional Housing (Singles)	18	102	9	129
Transitional Housing (Families)	30	10	8	48
Transitional Shallow Rent Subsidy**	5	10	10	25
Stable Housing (single site with support services)	0	14	0	14
Stable Housing (scattered-site with support services)	14	20	8	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>295</b>

\* There are two emergency shelters for 18-25 years olds in King County. The Landing, located in Bellevue, is open 5 nights per week and at times can expand from 12 to 15 beds. ROOTS, located in the University District, is open each night, and has a capacity of 20-25 beds.

\*\* This program is operated by YMCA, and is available to any homeless young adult in the county. It has a capacity of 25 recipients at a given time. Estimates for use by young adults have been made; actual use by residents of the three regions will vary from month to month.

In addition to these 295 units, some young adults receive housing assistance from single adult and families providers. According to the One Night Count of January 2008, approximately 300 young adults were living in adult and family units.

### Housing Continuum Need Summary

This plan demonstrates a great need for additional housing, combined with strong support services, for homeless young adults throughout King County. In order to make headway, existing programs must be supported and sustained, and new programs must be added to meet needs.

**Table 5** demonstrates the existing resources and the gap in housing assistance for homeless young adults in King County.

**Table 5:**  
Young Adults Served in Existing Housing and Number Who Are Not Served

Housing Type	Number
Young Adults in Young Adult-dedicated Housing (capacity at a given time)	295
Young Adults in Adult or Family Housing (capacity at a given time)*	300
<b>Sub-Total: Number of Young Adults Receiving Housing Assistance</b>	<b>595</b>
Young Adults who are Homeless (at a given time in 2008)	1,013
<b>Total GAP: Number of Homeless Young Adults Not Housed</b>	<b>418</b>

\* Approximately, based on average of 2007 and 2008 One Night Count, emergency or transitional programs only.

Stakeholders have made the following estimates for the types of housing that will be needed to meet the gap.

**Table 6** summarizes the unmet housing needs by housing type and region among homeless young adults through 2014, the final year of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County.

**Table 6:**  
Housing Continuum Needs, by Region and Housing Type

Housing Type	East/North County NEED	Seattle NEED	South County NEED	Total NEED
Emergency Housing	8	30	20	<b>58</b>
Transitional Housing	17	25	18	<b>60</b>
Stable Housing	65	125	110	<b>300</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>418</b>

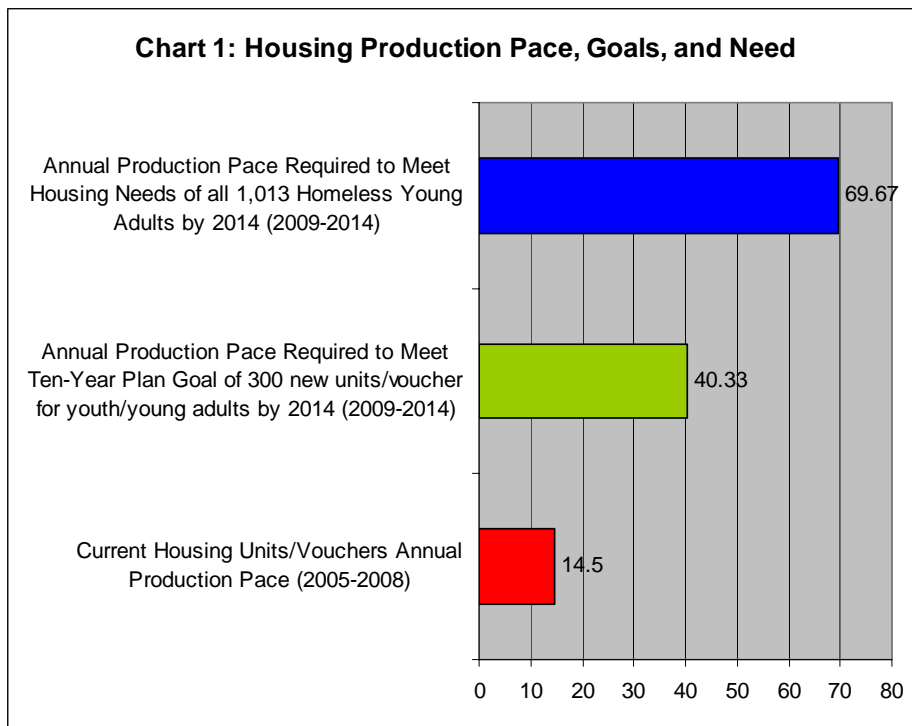
The Committee to End Homelessness estimated in 2004-2005 in its Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (*A Roof Over Every Bed*) that there was a need for an additional 300 permanent housing units or vouchers for young adults and youth (under age 18), combined, to be developed or created by 2014. To date, 8 new units of housing for young adults will have been developed through the first 4 years of the Ten-Year Plan, and the capacity to serve young adults in existing housing via rent subsidies has been expanded by about 50 young adults. This means that the current production pace for new units or vouchers for homeless young adults is 14.5 per year (58 new units/vouchers divided by four years). If this pace were to continue, 87 new units or vouchers would be made available to homeless young adults by 2014.

However, as the following chart demonstrates, the need for stable housing is larger than originally estimated in the Ten-Year Plan, and there continues to be a need for emergency and transitional

housing options. The most recent One Night Count indicated that emergency shelters are full and that many young adults are seeking shelter, and transitional housing, in programs that are designed for homeless single adults and families. In 2007, there were 256 young adults in programs designed for single adults and families, and in 2008, an additional 81 young adults, for a total of 337, were in housing for older homeless people. As described in the “Promising Practices” section, services and housing programs that are tailored to the developmental needs of young adult have demonstrated strong results, and young adults are likely only seeking older adult services because young adult programs are at capacity.

Stakeholders have identified a need for an additional 300 units/vouchers of stable housing for young adults, 60 new transitional units/vouchers, and 58 new emergency or short-term beds, for a total of 418 new units or vouchers. These estimates utilize 2008 homeless count estimates, which may be inadequate in 2014.

Therefore, in order to meet current need, the “rate of production” needs to be increased to nearly 70 units/vouchers per year, a 500 percent increase over the current production rate. The production needs to also include emergency and transitional housing types, in addition to non-time-limited, stable housing.



It is also important to reiterate that this increased production does not include estimates of need for homeless youth under 18. **To date, no new housing for homeless youth younger than 18 has been produced since the inception of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.**



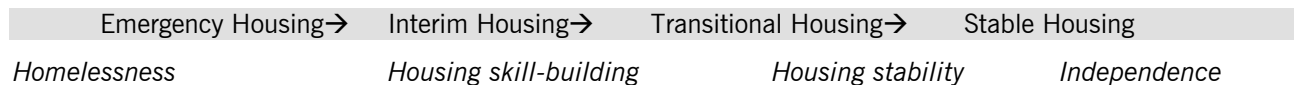
## Recommendations for Ending Young Adult Homelessness

Young adults and their advocates have identified strategies, based on the findings of this planning process, for recommendation to funders. These strategies will make a significant impact in ending young adult homelessness in King County. However, in order to be implemented, many of these strategies require funder support, provider capacity, and political will.

It is incumbent upon young adult advocates and homelessness advocates to prioritize the implementation of these recommendations. The Youth and Young Adult Committees of the Committee to End Homelessness and the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless and their member agencies must partner to achieve these recommendations.

Establishment of a complete housing continuum, building on existing programs, is the priority for each region. Each young adult will not have the same housing or service needs, but it is important that a range of housing and services options are available in each region of the county. The following graphic demonstrates the types of housing assistance that are part of this continuum, including a proposed new housing type (Interim Housing), which is a priority of the Seattle region. Some young adults will not follow this continuum linearly, instead requiring repeated steps toward housing stability and ultimately independence. The following graphic is shown to illustrate the housing continuum, and the various stages of housing stability a young adult may encounter.

### ***“Steps to Stability” Housing Continuum***



### **First Year (2008-2009) Priorities**

Stakeholders from each region have set a single priority for the first year of the implementation of this plan. It is expected that over the course of the next year, regional providers will work collaboratively to seek funding and implement these programs.

#### **East and North King County Regional Priority**

##### **Stable Housing (scattered-site)**

- a. Target population: 12 homeless young adults.
- b. Housing: Tenant pays portion of income for rent; units to be provider-based or tenant-based; landlord liaison services to assist young adults in finding and retaining housing. Housing is non-time-limited.
- c. Services: Services to be delivered by a team with core competencies of outreach, engagement, client-centered case management, and employment/education. Services will be tailored to be developmentally appropriate.
- d. Other: Priority for single adults.

e. Estimated Cost:

Category	Estimated Annual Cost
Support Services (includes personnel, operating costs, and client assistance funds)	\$171,648
Housing Services (includes rental assistance at approx. \$600/mo)	\$86,640
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$258,288</b>

**Emergency Shelter and Drop-In Center**

- a. Target population: 20 homeless young adults (an 8-bed increase from current capacity).
- b. Housing: Congregate shelter, available on an emergency basis. Acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing building is preferable to new construction.
- c. Services: Drop-in services for residents and other young adults, including mental health/chemical dependency counseling, health care and hygiene services, job training and education/GED, internships, and volunteering programs.
- d. Other: This program will require a new location due to lack of expansion capacity at existing program location (The Landing at YMCA).
- e. Estimated Cost:

Category	Estimated Annual Cost
Support Services (includes personnel, contracted services, operating costs, and food costs)	\$287,505
Housing Services (includes building rental and utilities expenses)	\$90,000
One-time Capital Expenses	\$315,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$692,505</b>

**Seattle Regional Priorities**

**Stable Housing (scattered-site)**

- a. Target population: 25 homeless young adults with high-level service needs, including those with mental health and chemical dependency issues, those exiting foster care, chronically homeless, or otherwise disabled.
- b. Housing: Tenant pays portion of income for rent; units to be provider-based or tenant-based; landlord liaison services to assist young adults in finding and retaining housing; housing to be of non-time-limited duration.

- c. Services: Developmentally appropriate services determined with common assessment tool, including employment, chemical dependency and mental health treatment, dental care, transportation, and child care.
- d. Other: Priority for programs that are ethnically and community-based, especially in areas of high need (SE/SW Seattle and Central District).
- e. Estimated Cost:

Category	Estimated Annual Cost
Support Services (includes personnel and operating costs)	\$350,000
Housing Services (includes rental assistance at approx. \$600/mo)	\$180,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$530,000</b>

**Interim Housing**

- a. Target population: 30 homeless young adults awaiting entry into transitional or non-time-limited stable housing and an opportunity for engagement
- b. Housing: Two, 15-bed interim congregate housing programs (average stay approximately 90 days). This program will provide safe housing for homeless young adults. Housing available on an emergency-basis, with beds guaranteed (rather than lottery system) for those working towards housing stability. Acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing building is preferable to new construction.
- c. Services: Case management, linkages to support services including employment, storage for belongings during day, 24-hour access.
- d. Other: Priority for programs that are ethnically and community-based, especially in areas of high need (SE/SW Seattle and Central District).
- e. Estimated Cost:

Category	Estimated Annual Cost
Support Services (includes personnel, operating costs, and food costs)	\$532,000
Housing Services	\$168,000
One-time Capital Expenses (these costs are expected but have not been determined)	TBD
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>

## South King County Regional Priorities

### **Stable Housing (scattered-site)**

- a. Target population: 30 homeless young adults, homeless or exiting foster care.
- b. Housing: Scattered-site, clustered housing in 3-5 cities for approximately 30 young adults: tenant pays portion of income for rent; units to be provider-based or tenant-based; landlord liaison services to assist young adults in finding and retaining housing. Housing is non-time-limited.
- c. Services: Client-centered services, with a core set of services that are mandatory, including regular interaction with staff and at least one social or educational activity every week. Services are designed to build skills, and support and motivate young adults to be self-sufficient and independent. Staff competencies will include outreach and engagement, employment/education (including pre-employment services, Individualized Development Accounts (IDA) and connections and support for education training resulting in post-secondary certification) and client-centered case management (regularly assess services needs, develop independent living skills, and connect and support clients in accessing support services).
- d. Other: For young adults who are unable to secure stable housing without assistance and who have an interest in achieving housing stability. In each city, 5-8 units will be clustered in one building to provide community and easier service delivery. At least one site will be located very close to a community college.
- e. Estimated Cost:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Cost</b>
Support Services (includes personnel, IDA program, equipment, mileage, and project administration)	\$430,472
Housing Services (includes rental assistance at approx. \$600/mo)	\$216,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$646,472</b>

## **Additional Strategies to Enhance System and Meet Regional Needs (2008-2014)**

In addition to the strategies that have been prioritized for implementation in Year 1, young adults and their advocates recommend implementing the following strategies by 2014. The Youth and Young Adult Committees of the Committee to End Homelessness and Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless should develop action-oriented plans to implement these strategies, including choosing strategies to work on in the short-term and those that may need to be addressed in the long-term.

Each year, stakeholders should review the needs identified in the previous section of this plan and determine annual priorities, on a regional basis and countywide.

### **Additional East and North King County Regional Priorities**

1. Stable Housing
  - a. Increase access to market housing through landlord liaison and set-aside rental subsidies/units with developmentally appropriate services.
2. Comprehensive Services
  - a. Expand access to primary health care, dental care, and mental health and chemical dependency treatment

### **Additional Seattle Regional Priorities**

1. Program Sustainability
  - a. Ensure that existing housing programs are sustained through long-term funding commitments, capacity building activities, and evaluation.
2. Stable Housing
  - a. Increase access to market rate housing through landlord liaison and set-aside rental subsidies/units with developmentally appropriate services.
3. Comprehensive Services
  - a. Expand access to primary health care, dental care, and mental health and chemical dependency treatment.

### **Additional South King County Regional Priorities**

1. Outreach, Engagement, and Emergency Shelter
  - a. Enhance street outreach to identify and engage homeless young adults and a drop-in center/services portal, with on-site shelter beds, health care, meals, and employment linkages. This strategy is vitally needed in South County, and while it is not the highest priority, these services are essential to building a strong continuum in South County.
2. Stable Housing
  - a. Increase access to market housing through landlord liaison and set-aside rental subsidies/units with developmentally appropriate services.

### 3. Comprehensive Services

- a. Develop health clinic for homeless young adults in South County to increase access to primary health care, dental care, and mental health and chemical dependency treatment.

## **Countywide System Enhancement Strategies**

### 1. Planning

- a. Develop funding priorities on an annual basis, by region, and regularly assess progress towards implementation of plan strategies.
- b. Develop a plan for homeless youth (under 18) that prioritizes programs and develops a comprehensive plan for ending youth homelessness.

### 2. Data

- a. Develop regular mechanism for counting homeless sheltered and unsheltered youth and young adults (unduplicated).

### 3. Homelessness Prevention

- a. Increase access to emergency financial assistance to homeless young adults. Set-asides are needed to ensure access. Coordinate with CEHKC homelessness prevention planning and existing programs.
- b. Increase access to landlord liaison services and ensure services are tailored for young adults in housing and those seeking housing. Coordinate with CEHKC landlord liaison program, operated by YWCA.
- c. Meet with and develop plan to improve coordination with school districts and alternative schools serving young adults over 18.
- d. Meet with and develop plan to improve coordination and ensure housing placements prior to homelessness for young adults existing the foster care and criminal justice system.
- e. Participate in planning for homelessness prevention services for King County, and ensure access to new and existing resources by homeless young adults.

### 4. Outreach and Engagement

- a. Improve access to information about programs and current availability by young adults and staff through the development new resource sharing mechanisms and new strategies for improving access to existing information sharing systems, including 211 and Crisis Clinic.
- b. Standardize knowledge and practices through enhanced training activities for case managers and other staff.

### 5. Comprehensive Services Continuum

- a. Ensure that service delivery is developmentally appropriate, available to young adults in their communities of origin, and that services options are ethnically-based and developed.
- b. Develop a common assessment tool for identifying the level or type of services needed by a client at intake and at regular intervals and to triage needs at entry, including the

possibility of connecting with natural supports, including family. Assessment tool should be completed in coordination with CEHKC coordinated entry initiatives.

- c. Monitor United Way of King County wrap-around model results for potential expansion.
  - d. Advocate for extending eligibility of young adults for the Medicaid/ Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) public coverage up to age 23, extending eligibility for all dependents under private coverage through age 23 and ensuring that colleges and universities offer affordable health insurance coverage to both full-time and part-time students.
6. Education and Employment Services Continuum
- a. Seek increased funding for training with focus on post-secondary credential building programs.
  - b. Train homeless young adult provider staff regularly to improve linkages to existing resources and to ensure that best practice program approaches are being utilized across the system.
  - c. Ensure access by young adults to existing mainstream employment and education resources, including YouthSource and Opportunity Grants.
  - d. Ensure inclusion of homeless young adults in the further development and implementation of the Workforce Education Collaborative.
  - e. Monitor results and seek renewal funding for short-term program pilots that demonstrate success, such as youth offender re-entry program.
7. Housing Services Continuum:
- a. Ensure that existing housing programs are sustained through long-term funding commitments, capacity building activities, and evaluation.
  - b. Ensure stronger service linkages in emergency housing to engage young adults in housing and services.
  - c. Monitor YMCA shallow-rent subsidy program to determine if capacity should be expanded.
  - d. Develop annual priorities and monitor progress towards of increasing capacity to serve 418 additional young adults with housing assistance, from current total of approximately 295 dedicated units/vouchers/beds (see Housing and Services Resources and Gaps section).
  - e. Advocate at federal level for changes in IRS code to allow for students to be eligible to receive housing assistance in programs that include Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

## Next Steps

The stakeholders involved in developing this report expect that the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, funders, providers and their partners will use this report and its contents to guide their policy and funding decisions. In addition, it is expected that the Youth and Young Adult Committees of the CEHKC and SKCCH will use a coordinated approach to guide the implementation of this plan. The efforts of all those who participated in the creation of this report are only well-spent if significant effort is put into implementing these strategies.



## Appendix A: Proposed Pilot Program for South King County Homeless Young Adults

The following summary of a pilot program for homeless young adults in South King County is proposed to funders for consideration in the development of future Requests for Proposals. This summary has been developed with input from South King County housing and services providers, homeless young adults living in South King County, and local public and private funders, and also incorporates research by experts and successful providers of housing and services from around the country.

A dedicated group of South King County providers has actively participated in this research and planning process for much of the past year. Their recommendation is to prioritize a scattered-site, supportive housing program for homeless young adults for funding at this time.

### Pilot Program

The central component of the proposed pilot program is a **scattered-site, non-time limited housing assistance model enhanced with services that support housing stability and build self-sufficiency of homeless young adults**. The pilot aims to serve approximately 30 young adult households in 3-4 housing sites. Housing and services must be accessible with minimal barriers and located in the community of origin of the young adults. Entry to the program will include assessment of each young adult's developmental stage and service needs. Ongoing assessments will be conducted frequently in order to continue to align appropriate services with needs. Services will be provided on-site and at provider locations in South King County. Program development and management will be centralized across housing and service sites.

Housing outcomes will include independent housing, positive roommate arrangements, and graduated rent subsidies including options for youth to transition in place. When appropriate, access to permanent supportive subsidized housing will be available for those who need on-going services. Service outcomes will include increased levels of self-sufficiency, education, employment and wage progression. The program will be evaluated for its program outcomes and considered for expansion and replication.

The following is an outline description of the various elements of the proposed program.

#### Population Focus:

<b>Age:</b>	18-25 at program entry (Provider will have discretion to allow entry to a small number of young adults over 25 based on developmental assessment.)
<b>Housing Status:</b>	Homeless and/or aging out of Foster Care
<b>Income Status:</b>	Less than 30% of median income or no income
<b>Targeted Tenant Profile:</b>	Young adults who are unable to secure stable housing without assistance and who have an interest in achieving housing stability. This includes young adults who do not possess the skills to live independently. Some young adults may have aged out of foster care or been involved in the juvenile or adult criminal justice system. In addition, most will likely have chemical dependency issues and some will have mental illness. Some will be single, some in couples, and others will have children.

### **Outreach and Engagement**

- Assertive outreach and in-reach methods are used to engage young adults and facilitate access to the program.
- Outreach and engagement is conducted by culturally competent staff members that reflect the demographics of homeless young adults in South King County.
- Members of the housing and services team will be involved in the outreach so that relationships in housing build on the trust developed in outreach and engagement.
- Referrals and outreach about program should be linked to existing South County homeless youth and young adult outreach.
- Referrals to come from street outreach, foster care system/providers, self-referral, shelters, human services agencies, schools, and the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Referrals to this program to be coordinated with countywide coordinated entry system when instituted.
- Referrals may come from providers anywhere in the county, as young adults who left South King County may have a desire to return to their communities of origin.

### **Program Intake and Assessment**

- Program staff to use the common assessment tool developed for the county-wide homeless young adult system to identify developmental stage, level of service need and appropriate referral, including assessment of family reunification potential (see Cocoon House model).
- Eligibility screening process does not include “housing readiness” criteria beyond their expressed interest in improving housing stability. Commitment to housing tenants with limited or no current income, histories of homelessness, histories of child welfare system or criminal justice involvement, and prior housing failures or no housing histories.
- Eligibility and program involvement allows for flexibility for clients to change their minds regarding acceptance of a unit or involvement in services above the core services required (see Support Services section).

### **Housing Stability Services**

<b>Number of Households:</b>	Approximately 30 homeless young adults in the program.
<b>Location(s):</b>	3-5 South King County cities. It is the hope that most sites will be located near community colleges, with the expectation that at least one will be in close proximity to a community college. Housing is in safe neighborhoods that are accessible to transit, grocery, services, jobs, and schools.
<b>Housing Assistance Type:</b>	Subsidized rental assistance in clustered units (5-8 in same complex) that are owned by or master leased by program sponsor agency. Funding will not be provided to new construction, acquisition or rehabilitation as part of the pilot but should be considered for expansion. Most apartments serving single young adults will be one-bedrooms, but flexibility will allow for appropriate roommate choices approved by program staff. Clustered housing allows for tenants to build community and support each other and for efficient service delivery (fewer sites) while still providing a “normalizing” apartment-living environment.

**Tenant Rent Contribution:** Tenants pay portion of their income for housing assistance. Tenant rent contributions should be structured so as to increase with income growth and promote a decreasing reliance on the subsidy during the course of tenancy (see CSH Building Better Futures, First Place case study for example of one model for doing this). Tenants should pay into savings accounts (see Support Services) each month as part of monthly bills to support their self-sufficiency goals (savings to be used for deposits, transportation for jobs, etc. upon program graduation).

**Housing Assistance Duration:** Non-time limited, but goal is for young adults to be paying for entire rental costs by end of 3 years or ready to do so with a roommate. Residents may be allowed to “age in place”. Staff will guide housing graduates to opportunities for low-cost market housing through coordinated roommate-sharing programs and facilitated access to subsidized programs.

### Support Services

**Staffing:** The program will have at least 3 full-time staff and a number of part-time staff. Staff roles include Program Coordinator, Outreach and Community Support Specialists (2.0 FTE), Career Pathways Specialist, Landlord Liaison Specialist (0.5 FTE). Additional contracts would be needed for behavioral health professionals, such as chemical dependency professional, psychiatrist, and/or mental health therapist. Staff will work as a team, sharing office space at a single site and possessing complementary skills. Staff will convene at least once per week to discuss clients’ status. Staff competencies will include outreach and engagement, employment/education (career pathways coordination, including pre-employment services and connections and support for education training resulting in post-secondary certification) and client-centered case management (regularly assess services needs, develop independent living skills, and connect and support clients in accessing support services). A proposed staffing model is provided in the program budget.

**Service Approach:** Client-centered services, with a core set of services that are mandatory, including regular interaction with staff and at least one social or educational activity every week. Other services are designed to meet the needs of the client. Services will be provided on-site and at provider locations in South King County, as appropriate, with centralized program development and management across housing sites. Services are designed to build skills, and support and motivate young adults to be self-sufficient and independent. Tenants are involved in program decision-making from the onset of the program and on an ongoing basis through involvement in program committees, tenant councils, or other mechanisms. An assessment tool will be utilized at entry and at regular

intervals to establish levels of service need, to measure effectiveness of services, and to recalibrate service levels based on client progress.

**Core Housing Stability Services**

Core services will focus on a goal of ongoing housing stability. Client-centered care coordination includes a training program that builds life skills and provides leadership, volunteering, community development, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Tenants in each housing cluster will be expected to meet each week with staff to build community and discuss and address issues.

**Core Asset Building Services:**

Core services will also focus on building self-sufficiency and assets. Asset building activities will include training, education (GED and tutoring), micro-loans (to support self-sufficiency and to be paid back incrementally during course of tenancy), individual development accounts (to be used for education, rent deposits, transportation expenses, etc.), and/or other incentive programs (see CSH Building Better Futures case studies, including First Place). Strong linkages to existing education and employment programs will be essential to developing career pathways for tenants. Programs will be linked with the Asset Building Coalition and Workforce Education Collaborative. Linkages to state resources for post-secondary education will be essential, including Opportunity Grants, as available through community and technical colleges.

**Core Services for Parenting Young Adults:**

Pregnant and parenting young adults will have an additional service overlay related to parenting skills and health and nutrition. These services will be linked to those provided by South County agencies whenever possible and geographically appropriate.

**Voluntary Services:**

Flexible voluntary services will support self-sufficiency and housing stability goals, and could include transportation, childcare, chemical dependency treatment, mental health treatment, and health care costs, including reproductive health and dental care, as appropriate and as payer of last resort. Strong linkages to existing services programs for adults and families will be required.

**Community Involvement:**

The program will employ the theory that “it takes a village” to help youth and young adults get on their feet. Community volunteers will participate in the program as members of wrap-around support networks, mentors, and providers of in-kind donations. Young adults in South King County require reliable transportation to achieve their goals. The program will engage the community to assist young adults in acquiring and repairing cars.

**Aftercare Services:**

Aftercare services are maintained for tenants who graduate from the housing program to ensure ongoing housing stability, and should include regular contact for first 6 months after

graduation and again at the one-year mark. It is expected that mentorships developed during the program will be long-lasting into the young adult's life.

### **Additional Services Principles:**

- Services emphasize maintaining link between young adult and their communities of origin, including connecting or reconnecting young adults to their natural support systems.
- Tenants have easy, facilitated access to a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services designed to assist in achievement of housing stability and economic self-sufficiency.
- Services are designed to decrease the complexity of navigating service systems that those with multiple services needs are now required to do on their own
- Service and property management strategies include effective, coordinated approaches for addressing issues resulting from substance use, relapse, and mental health crises.
- Service design includes comprehensive crisis prevention strategies, policies and procedures that address threatening and disruptive behavior.
- Program incorporates tenant accountability while also emphasizing flexibility and understanding of developmental needs of young adults.

### **Program Administration, Management, and Coordination**

- The program is managed through an effective partnership among representatives of the project sponsor, property management agent(s), supportive services provider(s), relevant public agencies, and tenants.
- Staff dedicated to a collaborative relationship between supportive services and property management staff results in effective, coordinated strategies to foster tenants' housing stability and independence and to prevent tenant evictions as a response to issues resulting from substance use, relapse, and mental health crises.
- Roles and responsibilities of all partners and staff are specified via MOUs/contracts.
- Service providers and program funders participate in a Steering Committee that meets regularly to ensure program utilization, address issues, coordinate approaches, and follow quality improvement plans.

### **Evaluation**

- Program reliably captures accurate and meaningful data about the effectiveness, efficiency, and outcomes of their activities, and uses this data to facilitate, and improve, the performance of those activities on an ongoing basis.
- Outcomes sought from program will be aligned with existing funders' performance measurement systems, including Pro-Youth and HUD. Outcomes will emphasize:
  - ⇒ Achievement of housing stability, including graduation from services and staying in the same unit with or without subsidy; graduation from services and moving into independent housing with or without subsidy; and graduation from services and moving into housing with friends.
  - ⇒ Accumulation of economic assets and attainment of self-sufficiency, including education and earned income through employment.
  - ⇒ Improvement in life skills assessment.

**Funding Expenses and Potential Sources**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Costs</b>	<b>Potential Source</b>
Housing Expenses	Annual Rental Subsidies for apartment units	\$216,000	King County Housing Authority
Support Services Expenses	Outreach and engagement services and client-centered care coordination  Services to support housing stability and self-sufficiency, including core, voluntary, community involvement, and young parenting services	\$367,925	King County Vets and Human Services Levy King County Homeless Housing and Services Fund document recording fees (2163, 1359) South King County cities
Program Administration	Oversight and coordination of program, including reporting	\$62,547	South King County churches
Evaluation	Measurement of outcomes	\$50,000	Private philanthropy State programs, such as HGAP, IYHP
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$696,472</b>	

