

Through 100-Day Challenges in

SPOKANE, PIERCE & KING COUNTIES

615

YOUNG PEOPLE WERE
CONNECTED TO STABLE
HOUSING IN 100 DAYS.



100-Day Challenges to Impact Youth & Young Adult Homelessness: Washington State Report

Spokane | Pierce County | King County



This initiative was generously supported by the Raikes Foundation and the Schultz Family Foundation. The Rapid Results Institute designed the challenges and provided coaching and support to the 100-day teams.



100-Day Challenges to Impact Youth & Young Adult Homelessness

INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, communities in King, Pierce, and Spokane counties came together in an unprecedented effort to improve the lives of youth and young adults too often forgotten in our state. The goal: to spend 100 days accelerating and rethinking our efforts to support youth and young adults who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. While these 100-Day Challenges stably housed 615 young people—an impressive accomplishment in its own right—the work will continue to deliver results, thanks to the lessons learned through the hard work of these communities.

Over the summer, 100-Day Challenge teams focused on reaching, engaging, and supporting young people who face some of the toughest barriers—and they made phenomenal progress. This report provides a look at that progress, how it was achieved, and what we can do to sustain it. It also captures the incredible hard work—on top of their existing workloads—of the 100-day team members, and their recommendations going forward. We believe it will serve as a compass for future work in Washington state and across the nation.

At AWHWA, through this process we were reminded of old lessons and learned several new ones that I'd like to share:

- It is critical to have a plan with clear end goals that are measurable and time-bound
- Full representation of the community is essential, especially the voices of young people
- Equity goals, a sense of urgency, and good data are key elements of a successful plan
- We must support our direct service staff members who transform the plan into relationships and meaningful outcomes
- We are stronger TOGETHER!

You can learn more by viewing a [webinar](#) we recorded recently to recap this effort.

Convening the 100-Day Challenges would not have been possible without the partnership of the [Rapid Results Institute](#), which designed the challenges and provided coaching and mentorship to the 100-day teams, as well as the [Raikes Foundation](#) and [Schultz Family Foundation](#). I can't thank our partners enough for believing in our teams and our mission, and for being such fierce champions over the course of these past several months. I'd also like to express gratitude to our systems leaders and local partners, who made these results possible. Most of all, thank you to the youth and young adults who displayed resilience and courage while searching for stable housing.

The 100-Day Challenges inspire all of us to do more to support Washington's youth. Going forward, A Way Home Washington, in partnership with the state Office of Homeless Youth and local communities, is committed to building a statewide, coordinated system that is data-informed, performance-driven, and holds youth and families at the center in preventing and ending youth and young adult homelessness. We hope you will join us. Let's continue the momentum so all of Washington's young people can find their way home.

Sincerely,

Jim Theofelis

Executive Director, A Way Home Washington

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." –African Proverb

100-DAY CHALLENGES

In April 2017, A Way Home Washington (AWHWA) – in partnership with the Rapid Results Institute, Raikes Foundation and Schultz Family Foundation – convened groups from King, Pierce, and Spokane counties to launch 100-Day Challenges to accelerate efforts to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness. The 100-Day Challenges model, pioneered by the Rapid Results Institute, rallies relevant stakeholders around a shared objective – in this case, to get over 700 youth (12-17) and young adults (18-24) experiencing homelessness housed quickly. 100-Day Challenges intend to disrupt conventional ways of thinking and encourage innovative approaches to long-standing problems.

The Challenge started with a two-day workshop in Seattle where teams from Spokane, King County, and Pierce County met to set their goals for housing young people over the 100-day period. They were encouraged to think big—establishing audacious, but achievable, goals to help accelerate the great work they were already leading. The Rapid Results Institute coached the teams and facilitated workshops at key points during the Challenges. Teams included frontline staff from service provider organizations and local government agencies, as well as young people with lived experience of homelessness.

With at least 13,000 youth and young adults accessing homelessness services in Washington state each year, the 100-Day Challenge teams pushed for smarter, faster solutions. The Challenges concluded on July 29, and the three communities connected a total of 615 youth and young adults to housing.

COMMON THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the 100 days, teams discovered new ways of thinking about the problem of youth homelessness. This report examines the progress and challenges each community faced in reaching their Challenge goals. While some of the findings were unique to each community, we also saw common themes emerge over the 100 days:

- **Setting ambitious, time-bound goals** spurred innovation and community action. The 100-day deadline required public agencies and nonprofit providers to work differently.
- Each community **incorporated ideas and perspectives of youth and young adults** who have experienced homelessness—a powerful reminder that those affected by homelessness have the needed expertise and must have a voice in shaping how we prevent it.
- Each community worked on generating a **By-Name List**, an emerging best practice that identifies young people in need of housing. This puts service providers in the position to strategically track the demand for housing resources, analyze why specific youth and young adults remain on the waitlist, and find different options based on individuals' needs.
- Teams learned the importance of **refining their Coordinated Entry approaches** to more quickly help young people get into housing.
- All three communities explored **“Housing First” models** that quickly connect young people with housing options and supportive services.
- The teams affirmed the importance of **engaging a wide range of partners** in the community to help uncover innovative solutions, and the importance of **having the “right people” at the table** who are empowered and supported to meet their ambitious, short-term goals.

KING COUNTY

GOAL	RESULT
House 450 youth and young adults	Housed 330 youth and young adults
At least 60% would identify as LGBTQ+ and/or youth and young adults of color	76% of those housed were youth of color and/or identified as LGBTQ+
House all 292 young adults who were unsheltered at the start of the challenge	54 of the original unsheltered young adults were housed

WHAT WORKED WELL

While they did not reach their bold numerical goal, King County exceeded their goal for supporting youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth and placed more young people in housing than any previous 100-Day Challenge—a huge accomplishment. Housing 330 young people also represented a 70% increase compared to the same time period in 2016 (when only 194 youth and young adults were housed). Here is what proved successful for the team:

- **Establishing a process:** Set weekly team meetings and created an efficient system to capture the team’s requests to system leaders.
- **Making innovative county-level policy changes:** Encouraged youth who were accessing Rapid Rehousing resources to live together as roommates, and granted more flexibility and discretion to case managers in selecting housing for youth.
- **Hosting housing events:** Held a housing event that cut steps and time from housing process and allowed attendees to be referred to housing resources that same day.
- **Adopting creative housing strategies:** Maximized and shared limited resources by improving communication about the availability of diversion funding resources and increased outreach to recruit more host homes. Diversion programs also expanded program eligibility to support young people in transitional housing programs exit more quickly to permanent housing.
- **Changing the Coordinated Entry process:** Allowed young adults to be placed into housing directly by service providers if Coordinated Entry placement was not available within 5 days, and continuing to promote a “Housing First” model by reducing or removing eligibility criteria like criminal history.
- **Involving a wide group of partner organizations:** Worked in collaboration with organizations across the county.

LESSONS LEARNED

The King County team highlighted some important lessons learned that will inform future work:

- **Limited funding and housing availability:** Housing is extremely limited in King County and often doesn’t match the needs of youth and young adults, especially those with the most vulnerability, including behavioral health challenges.
- **Variation in program practices:** Program design varies widely throughout the county, so some policy changes made during the Challenge were not implemented consistently across organizations. The team also said that it would have helped to have more front-line staff who work directly with young people participate on the 100-day team.
- **Need to include single adult and family homelessness providers:** More than 40 percent of young adults are being served by the adult and family systems that did not participate in the challenge.

PIERCE COUNTY

GOAL	RESULT
House 168 youth and young adults—twice the number of young people identified in the county’s annual point-in-time count	Housed 176 youth and young adults
At least 40% would identify as LGBTQ+, 40% would be youth and young adults of color, and 30% would be minors	17% identified as LGBTQ+, 63% were youth and young adults of color, and 27% were minors
Develop 100 new successful housing options, including foster home opportunities, host homes, and new landlords	175 new housing options were developed

WHAT WORKED WELL

The Pierce County team exceeded almost every Challenge goal they set by doing the following:

- **Removing barriers and using technology:** Added pet kennels and secure storage to drop-in center, distributed cell phones to young people waiting for housing resources, provided technological tools for case workers to travel to clients and conduct housing assessments in the field, and provided bus passes and bicycles to youth and young adults.
- **Improving housing resources:** Engaged landlords with incentives, provided donated household items and furniture, and used flexible funding to help young people make their places feel like home.
- **Focusing on the needs of marginalized youth and young adults:** Trained service providers to ask youth about LGBTQ+ identity to better place and connect them to resources.
- **Making innovative county-level policy changes:** Streamlined Coordinated Entry process by incorporating additional staff and designating time for them to be onsite at youth centers.
- **Partnering with youth:** Employed youth representatives with experience of homelessness to conduct street outreach and inform processes.
- **Strengthening relationships with local philanthropic partners:** Connected with funders in the Pierce County region who were willing to come to the table in a new way through the Challenge.
- **Involving a wide group of partner organizations:** Worked in collaboration with organizations across the county to establish common practices and shared goals.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Pierce County team highlighted some important lessons learned that will inform future work:

- **Coordinating with other providers:** Systems and processes varied across county organizations, and there was difficulty gathering the data the team needed to move forward.
- **Language matters:** Asking questions about LGBTQ+ identity is important to learn how to best serve young people, and questions should be asked in specific, sensitive ways. Staff training is often needed to reinforce best practices.
- **Adding capacity and flexibility to Coordinated Entry:** Realizing they didn’t have to accept the status quo allowed the team to deputize additional agencies to assess young people for housing and send greater numbers to the Coordinated Entry system.

SPOKANE

GOAL	RESULT
House 100 youth and young adults	Housed 109 youth and young adults
With at least 50% being systems-involved (engaged within the juvenile justice, foster care, chemical dependency, and behavioral health systems)	52% were systems-involved
Include at least 10 minors	43 of those housed were minors

WHAT WORKED WELL

The Spokane team exceeded its goals by doing the following:

- **Using a public relations campaign to engage the community:** Promoted Challenge through social and earned media that resulted in donations and volunteer help from public and business community. The Spokane area was energized and inspired to impact youth and young adult homelessness like never before.
- **Changing the Coordinated Entry assessment process:** Added new TAY-VI SPDAT assessment tool to facilitate Coordinated Entry placements. Made the Coordinated Entry process as accessible as possible by providing walk-in hours and going directly to youth.
- **Improving housing resources:** Used flexible funds to mitigate move-in costs for youth, expanded eligibility for family unification vouchers, and provided incentives for landlords to rent to youth.
- **Implementing new housing programs:** Integrated Rapid Rehousing (Housing First) and rental assistance programs to help young adults find housing and stay in it.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Spokane team highlighted some important lessons learned that will inform future work:

- **Lack of housing availability:** Spokane has a 0.7% vacancy rate, and youth often have a harder time accessing these limited housing resources. There is no dedicated shelter for young adults in Spokane.
- **Authentic youth engagement:** Youths' time is valuable. They should be fairly compensated for their contributions to the homeless system and supported by staff.
- **Healthy adult relationships:** Youth are skilled at identifying non-family resources in their networks. Work must be done to help facilitate and support these healthy adult relationships.

BEYOND 100 DAYS: CARRYING THE WORK FORWARD

In addition to celebrating the hundreds of young people who got connected to housing through the 100-Day Challenges, A Way Home Washington is excited to share the teams' insights so that, together, we can build a path forward to ensure every young person has a safe and stable place to call home. We hope these findings will inspire other communities to overcome similar barriers and replicate promising practices that Spokane, King, and Pierce counties tested.

The 100-Day Challenges concluded with each team generating specific proposals that they are currently promoting for adoption throughout their local systems. This work will continue to inform and contribute to ongoing local, state, and national-level efforts.

KING COUNTY TEAM PROPOSALS

- **Increase community-based housing options:** Follow through with host home program expansion.
- **Continue to hold housing events:** Hold future housing events following the successful one held during the Challenge.
- **Ensure youth involvement:** Incorporate and adequately compensate youth who experienced homelessness as subject matter experts in all aspects of housing policy.
- **Deploy a “Housing First” model:** Decrease barriers to housing access by eliminating background checks and allowing immediate enrollment.
- **Permanently integrate flexible funding using a diversion approach:** Continue pilot program that provides money to remove barriers and help youth in transitional housing exit homelessness quickly, such as paying for utilities or helping with transportation to and from work or school.
- **Maintain changes to Coordinated Entry process:** To decrease the amount of time that young people experience homelessness, permanently adopt the policy allowing service providers to fill units directly, outside of Coordinated Entry, if no referral is made within 5 days, and refer every young person to a housing navigator with 48 hours of completing the Housing Triage Tool.
- **Require changes to the data system:** Promote the existence of an easy-to-use By-Name List.
- **Continue informing county-wide efforts:** King County is one of 10 sites selected to receive a grant via the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. Concurrent with the 100-Day Challenge, King County has been developing its plan for using the \$5.4 million grant. As the Challenge progressed, King County incorporated recommendations generated by the Challenge into its overall plan for using this significant federal grant – this is an early example of how the Challenge is having an impact on system change in King County.

PIERCE COUNTY TEAM PROPOSALS

- **Create new positions to add local capacity and involve young people:** Hire two to three peer outreach workers with lived experience of homelessness and a full-time coordinator to manage the outreach team, gather critical data, build relationships with other providers, and expand communications outreach.

SPOKANE TEAM PROPOSALS

- **Implement host home program for minors:** Provide local funding for host homes to address needs of most vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness (including youth and young adults of color and those that identify as LGBTQ+).
- **Provide holistic rental assistance:** Continue using and funding HOME tenant-based rental assistance program to provide youth with rental assistance, connect them to education and employment, and create landlord liaison position.

- **Ensure youth involvement:** Pay youth advisory board participants and provide a program coordinator to support them to ensure the voices of young people with lived experience of homelessness are heard and included meaningfully.
- **Create shelter for young adults:** Provide facility that houses young adults separately from chronically homeless adults and connects them to services.

WASHINGTON STATE EFFORTS

In the next year, to build on the momentum from the 100-Day Challenges, A Way Home Washington plans to support several communities to take a deeper, local approach to ending youth and young adult homelessness. We also will work with advocacy partners during the 2018 legislative session to push for new policies and programs that will empower and support vulnerable youth and young adults. Working together, we can prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness and write a new future for Washington's young people.

NATIONAL EFFORTS

A Way Home Washington's national partner, [A Way Home America](#), is working with the Rapid Results Institute to engage communities around the country in the campaign to end youth and young adult homelessness, using 100-Day Challenges to ignite change and action. Apart from the three communities in Washington state, eight communities have begun or completed their 100-Day Challenges. Five additional communities will launch their 100-Day Challenges in 2018.

THANK YOU

The 100-Day Challenges would not have been possible without the hard work, determination, and coordination of all the system leaders, local partners, and 100-day team members in each community. Their collective efforts supported youth and young adults as they displayed resiliency and courage in obtaining housing.

We recognize the incredible work of our partners and thank them for their support.

SPOKANE

- Career Path Services
- Catholic Charities Spokane
- Central Valley School District
- Children's Administration
- City of Spokane
- Excelsior
- Frontier Behavioral Health
- Hutton Settlement
- Juvenile Court Services
- The Mockingbird Society
- Odyssey Youth Movement
- Providence Health Care
- The Salvation Army
- Spokane Area Workforce Development Council
- Spokane Housing Authority
- Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP)
- Spokane Public Schools
- Spokane Regional Health District
- TeamChild
- United Way of Spokane
- Volunteers of America
- Walker Construction
- Youth Family Adult Connections

KING COUNTY

- Accelerator YMCA
- All Home
- City of Seattle
- Friends of Youth
- King County
- The Mockingbird Society
- Multi-Service Center
- New Horizons
- Nexus Youth and Family Services
- Ryther Center for Children and Youth
- United Way of King County
- YouthCare

PIERCE COUNTY

- Associated Ministries
- Catholic Community Services
- City of Tacoma
- City of Tacoma Young Adult Collaborative
- Community Cycle Center
- Community Youth Services
- Comprehensive Life Resources
- Hilltop Artists
- Juvenile Court
- MDC (Metropolitan Development Council)
- The Mockingbird Society
- NW Furniture Bank
- Oasis Youth Center
- Pierce County
- Pierce County AIDS Foundation
- Pierce County Alliance
- Rainbow Center
- REACH
- Shared Housing Services
- Sound Transit
- Tacoma Housing Authority
- TeamChild
- Tacoma Public Schools
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Vadis
- YWCA

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