

## SYSTEM INNOVATION GRANT – SHELTER TO HOUSING PROJECT

---

A total of \$554,000 has been awarded to publicly funded emergency shelters serving families experiencing homelessness in King County: (\$372,000 through Building Changes, Washington Youth & Families Fund System Innovation Grants and up to \$182,000 through King County Department of Community and Human Services). Contracts begin in March 2015. King County funds are available for one year and Building Changes funds for two years, the majority of which are to be used for flexible, client assistance (minus a small proportion of funds for admin and program costs).

The Shelter to Housing Project is intended to assist families in resolving their episode of homelessness and transition out of shelter more quickly. Shelters will support families in identifying creative solutions to exit shelter quickly and will focus on preparing families to qualify for housing in the private rental market. Flexible funds will address a range of needs including but not limited to fees associated with obtaining identification records, background and credit checks, application fees and one time assistance with move in costs and rental or utility areas. These same strategies can assist families in expediting their transition to other homeless housing should the family need to. Additionally, lessons learned will be incorporated in future public funding for family shelter.

### Goals

---

There are three primary goals of the Shelter to Housing Project:

- **Increase the rates of permanent housing outcomes from emergency shelter**
  - Efforts will be focused on self-resolution strategies where families are encouraged to explore options outside the traditional homeless housing system (similar to efforts underway in Diversion)
  - In 2013, 1:4 families residing in shelter exited directly to permanent housing
    - 2015 system target: 1 out of 3 families residing in shelter exit directly to permanent housing (established by CEH Data & Evaluation Workgroup; affirmed by CEH Inter-Agency Council)
- **Reduce the overall lengths of stay in shelter**
  - By focusing on efforts to increase the likelihood households will more quickly qualify for housing, exits from shelter to housing or other programs (like Rapid Re-housing) should occur more quickly
  - In 2013, families stayed in shelter for an average of 112 days
    - 2015 system target: Shelter lengths of stay reduce to 100 days (established by CEH Data & Evaluation Workgroup; affirmed by CEH Inter-Agency Council)
- **Align future public funding to the strategies identified in this project**
  - The strategies and allowable/eligible costs of this project align with the direction of regional and local homeless housing resources.
  - On-going learning opportunities will focus on identifying effective strategies to support the goals of this project and to the efforts of incorporating client assistance funds of this nature in future operating budgets.

### Strategies

---

Each shelter provider will continue to work quickly to engage families in addressing their immediate needs related to the crisis of homelessness, and will begin identifying potential solutions families self-identify to resolve their homelessness. Similar to strategies utilized in Diversion, shelter staff will work with each family to

develop a housing stability plan and explore options the family can identify to help them end their episode of homelessness as quickly as possible.

For some families this could include strategies that will assist them in moving directly to permanent housing:

- The payment of housing application fees, security deposits, and/or first and last month's rent
- Assistance with moving costs (including returning to communities where they have existing support systems)
- Relocation costs should a family have alternative housing options outside King County
- Household costs (such as food costs in the form of grocery cards, transportation assistance, utility assistance and/or rent payment) in order to leverage a family's existing support networks or alleviate the household costs of a host family

For other families the Shelter to Housing project provides flexible client assistance funds to support families in addressing efforts to more quickly qualify for housing:

- Re-issuing birth certificates
- Photo identification
- Emergency childcare or transportation costs to support families in housing-related activities

These funds are meant to be flexible but focused on addressing each family's unique needs in attaining housing.

### ***Other Resources & Information***

---

- **Closing the Front Door – Creating a Successful Diversion Program for Homeless Families (NAEH):** ([http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/2b98efdfcf27486475\\_uim6b5a3h.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/2b98efdfcf27486475_uim6b5a3h.pdf))
- **Rapid Re-Housing Strategies** – webinars and materials from Family Homelessness Initiative: (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/socialservices/Housing/ServicesAndPrograms/Programs/Homeless/HomelessFamilies/Materials.aspx>)
- **Core Components of Rapid Re-housing (NAEH):** (<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing2>)
- **Housing Identification:** <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/webinar-recording-rapid-re-housing-core-component-housing-identification>
- **Prevention and Diversion Tool Kit (NAEH):** <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/prevention-and-diversion-toolkit-program-planning-design-and-implementation>
- **Dudley Diversion Project (NAEH):** [http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/c7b705218fad609a56\\_nv6b6bh8j9.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/c7b705218fad609a56_nv6b6bh8j9.pdf)