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## Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

**When young people have a safe and stable home, supportive connections and access to needed services, they have the opportunity to successfully transition into adulthood and thrive.**

The circumstances that lead youth (ages 12 to 18) and young adults (ages 18 through 24) to experience homelessness can vary from person to person. They may be rooted in family conflict, like running away from an abusive household or being kicked out of their home after coming out to their family as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning. Other key contributing factors include racial disparities and systemic inequalities, aging out of foster care, poverty, mental health challenges, substance misuse and more.

**An estimated 13,000 – 15,000 young people in Washington are experiencing homelessness – the equivalent of nearly a quarter of the state’s entire high school graduation class per year.**

## A Way Home Washington

A Way Home Washington (AWHWA) is a statewide movement to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness, with a focus on prioritizing young people of color and LGBTQ+ youth, who experience homelessness at higher rates than their white, straight, cisgender peers. Co-Chaired by First Lady Trudi Inslee, we lead and unite passionate stakeholders across the state to build systems that can respond to the unique needs of *all* young people.

**Yes to Yes. When a young person says “Yes, I need help” we want to be sure a local community has the systems and resources in place to say “Yes, come inside for safe housing and a path forward.”**

## Our Approach

A Way Home Washington provides strategic statewide support and intensive support in communities to inform, grow and sustain efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults. **Our approach in Washington state is strengths-based, focusing on youth self-determination, centering the voices of young people with experience of homelessness, and prioritizing youth and young adults disproportionately impacted – Black, Indigenous and other youth of color and youth who identify as LGBTQ+.**

The circumstances that lead to the experience of homelessness can vary greatly, so solutions also need to be varied. Tailoring approaches to prevent and end homelessness for young people according to their circumstances and the communities they live in is the focus of the Anchor Communities Initiative, A Way Home Washington's flagship program.



### **Foster Collaboration**

In each Anchor Community, a diverse coalition brings together all parts of a community with partners committing to work across systems and silos, sticking with their collective approach to functionally end youth homelessness.



### **Activate Innovation**

We provide coaching and tailored assistance to communities, encouraging creative approaches to reach their collective goals. This can include creating a prevention network, emergency response, housing and supportive resources, treatment services, employment and educational attainment and more.



### **Prevent & Divert**

Ending youth homelessness is not just about helping someone exit homelessness, it requires reaching a young person before they ever enter the homelessness system. The Centralized Diversion Fund is an important tool to remove small barriers and end a young person's housing crisis.



### **Data & Equity**

Communities create By-Name Lists that identify each unaccompanied young person experiencing homelessness. This personalized information helps communities to connect young people with the right resources, including youth of color and youth who identify as LGBTQ+ who are disproportionately impacted.



### **Represent & Advocate**

We are prominent advocates statewide and in local communities. We provide a platform for young people's voices, ideas, and perspectives, working side-by-side to grow understanding, pass laws and regulations, and to sustain support for efforts that prevent and end youth homelessness.

[awayhomewa.org](http://awayhomewa.org)