

Student Stability Innovation Grants Frequently Asked Questions



What does ‘unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness’ mean?

Homelessness systems are divided into subpopulations, with different service providers often specializing in providing services to one specific population - Families, Single Adults, Veterans, Chronic, Domestic Violence, and unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults. Unaccompanied youth and young adults (often shortened to homeless youth, YYA or HYYA in homelessness systems) are young people between the ages of 12-24 who are disconnected or not living with/cared for by a parent or guardian. Unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults can often fit into multiple populations and be eligible for services in different systems, with youth and young adult providers being specifically tailored to suit their unique needs.

What is A Way Home Washington’s definition of youth and young adult homelessness and how does it compare with the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness?

A Way Home Washington defines youth and young adult homelessness as unaccompanied young people ages 12-24 who are considered homeless under Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition as well as young people who are unstably housed, couchsurfing and/or doubled up.

Education systems use the FRA - Fixed, Regular and Adequate housing - definition of homelessness, which includes young people experiencing homelessness by the HUD definition above as well as those who are doubled up, couchsurfing or migrant children. If young people meet this definition for one day out of the school year they are eligible for services for the entire school year.

For the Student Stability Innovation Grants project and all A Way Home Washington projects, we want to support communities to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness by the end of 2022. This means that projects can target solutions towards any groups of **unaccompanied** students experiencing a housing crisis who meet the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness.

Please see appendix G of the Student Stability Innovation Grants Guidelines for a detailed description of these definitions.

We want to do a project that will take more than 3 months to test. Can we still apply for funds?

The intent of this project is to enable teams to conduct true small-scale tests of innovative ideas for ending student homelessness. While we have a strong preference for tests that take 3 months or fewer to complete, we may consider longer tests if Core Teams make a strong case as to why, and if the idea is strong in other areas, such as addressing disproportionality. Many tests can be scaled down to a smaller scope; talk to your lead coach to brainstorm ways to scale down!

What does A Way Home Washington mean by “innovative change ideas”?

One of the scored criteria in the Student Stability Innovation Grants review process is creativity/innovation. We want to learn more about the impact of new approaches and to test, on a small scale, system changes that our communities may otherwise not explore. We will score projects high if the change idea is entirely new, something that hasn't been tried in Washington before, or a major adaptation of a common approach. We will score ideas low if they are supplementing existing projects or if similar projects exist in the community already. In your Grant Request, make the case for what you think is innovative about your idea!

What if, halfway through our test, we realize our original plan isn't going to work - what should we do?

Complete and submit the [Project Completion Form](#) that outlines how much of the grant you have spent and the idea that you plan to pivot to. The ACI Project Director will review the form and approve or decline the request.

In the “Declined Requests” section of the Innovation Grants Guidelines, it states a grant request may be declined for “lack of communication with A Way Home Washington”.

What does that mean?

We believe that for these projects to be successful learning opportunities, solid communication between Core Team members and AWHWA is crucial. We expect Leads and Coordinators to respond to their Coaching and Improvement Manager and other AWHWA staff on ACI related issues so that we can provide support and thought partnership. If we cannot get in contact with the applicant and/or grantee to resolve outstanding questions or confirm details needed to execute the grant in a reasonable amount of time, we may table a request until the communication issue is resolved.

Can these grants be used to prevent or end family homelessness?

Unaccompanied students experiencing homelessness are often face unique barriers and challenges to safe stable housing, and many students may sometimes be connected to family/guardians and at other times not be. The primary purpose of this project is to support

work to prevent and end unaccompanied student homelessness. System changes that support unaccompanied homeless students may also create positive outcomes for students experiencing family homelessness, but the primary focus for a project should be on ensuring that students that are unstably housed and disconnected from family or at risk of being disconnected from family are able to access safe and stable housing.

Young people (12-24) who meet AWHWA's definition of homelessness and who are pregnant or parenting fall into the definition of family homelessness and youth and young adult homelessness and communities can use Innovation Grants to target this population!

We have a project related to ending student homelessness, but it isn't related to the public k-12 system; is that allowed?

Yes! This project requires funds be spent on ending unaccompanied student homelessness (for students aged 12-24), and projects can be used in relation to diverse educational settings like charter schools, alternative schools, community colleges, etc. All funds must be spent in efforts to end unaccompanied student homelessness.

We have a school or partner that is interested in participating, but they aren't in Yakima, Pierce County, Walla Walla or Spokane. Can we partner with them?

This project is focused on supporting communities to move closer towards their goal of preventing and ending unaccompanied youth and young adult homelessness in these four communities by the end of 2022. While there is no specific rule that all grantees must be based in one of these four counties, all funded projects should focus on preventing and ending homelessness for youth and young adults in one of these four counties.

How can AWHWA help us sustain projects that are getting positive results after the test period?

The purpose of this project is to illuminate and spread new, creative ideas for ending student homelessness in communities and find out what works. While we cannot sustain funding beyond the test periods, we are committed to supporting communities in making the case for sustained funding for projects that work.