

2023 Legislative Agenda

A Way Home Washington is a statewide movement designed to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness with a focus on serving marginalized communities. In a time when homelessness is a growing and polarizing issue, we are showing that effective systems change is possible.

About A Way Home Washington: We provide strategic, calibrated, statewide support to communities participating in our flagship program, the Anchor Community Initiative (ACI), to inform, grow, and sustain systems change efforts. Through our ACI partners, we are offering the game-changing Homelessness Prevention & Diversion Fund (HPDF), which is a flexible and proven tool to address homelessness in the hands of youth and our community partners.

TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

ANCHOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVE	HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & DIVERSION FUND	YOUTH DIVERSION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT (YDIP)
<p>We seek \$8 million in maintenance funds for the ACI, a partnership with A Way Home Washington and Office of Homeless Youth to end youth and young adult homelessness in selected communities.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>Our Anchor Community in Walla Walla is on track to end youth homelessness, seeing a 60% reduction in 2021-2022. The program has had great success shifting the Walla Walla system to one that can quickly serve and permanently house YYA and is making progress in other rural and urban ACI communities. We want to ensure that Washington state remains fully behind the progress of this initiative through continued maintenance funding for the next biennium.</p>	<p>We seek an increase in funding to \$5 million over the 2023-2024 biennium, as this flex fund program has proven to house more young people than any other housing strategy where it operates.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>The HPDF continues to be one of the greatest reasons we have seen such great successes in Anchor Communities. With less than \$2,000 per intervention, we have secured unique housing for young people that lasts, as 93% YYAs are still housed a year later. An increase in the HPDF (formerly the Centralized Diversion Fund) would go a long way to continue the trajectory of preventing youth and young adults across our state in both rural and urban communities from experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>We seek continued investments stemming from last year’s passage of HB 1905 to keep ensuring that system of care grants support early interventions that prevent youth and young adults from exiting publicly funded systems of care into homelessness.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>Exits from systems of care is a key driver of young people experiencing homelessness, resulting in the harmful shift from one system to another. We cannot get to a yes-to-yes model in Washington — where young people have the resources they need and want for stable housing without having to leave their community — unless we have targeted and specialized resources that prevent homelessness at the source.</p>

Support Agenda

HOST HOMES	YOUTH INITIATED SHELTER	GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME
<p>Provide a pathway to identify who is a host home, and ensure the Office of Homeless Youth receives accurate, up-to-date information about current host homes. Guardians of young people who are unhoused or in foster care should be relieved of some burdens for their service in helping youth grow with a stable upbringing.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>We know that host homes are a low-barrier, low-cost support that can lead to long-term stability and expand housing options. Host homes are a rising innovative practice that communities of color have uplifted as a priority.</p>	<p>Grant youth the ability to obtain safe shelter for themselves in furtherance of securing stable housing and supportive help.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>Legal nuance makes it hard for emergency shelters to accept unaccompanied minors into shelter without parental consent or accompaniment. Youth experiencing homelessness who are not connected with family face significant barriers to housing, health care and other crucial services. In an effort to support youth who are on their own from experiencing homelessness, it is imperative we remove as many barriers as possible to allow access to emergency shelters.</p>	<p>Support targeted, guaranteed income for historically marginalized communities, following recommendations for a pilot as reported by the DSHS.</p> <p>WHY WE SUPPORT</p> <p>A targeted guaranteed basic income would be instrumental to countering the economic impacts a potential recession could bring. Guaranteed basic income would prevent homelessness for families, youth, and young adults in BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and poor communities across the state.</p>

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