

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

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.

WHY WE SUPPORT

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.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & DIVERSION FUND

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.

WHY WE SUPPORT

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.



A Way Home Washington also supports the legislative priorities of our partners at the Washington State Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), the Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy (WACHYA), and Building Changes.

Support Agenda

YOUTH INITIATED SHELTER

Grant youth the ability to obtain safe shelter for themselves in furtherance of securing stable housing and supportive help.

WHY WE SUPPORT

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.

GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME

Support targeted, guaranteed income for historically marginalized communities, following recommendations for a pilot as reported by the DSHS.

WHY WE SUPPORT

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.

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