

Arlington Drive Youth Campus and Young Adult Housing Program Report



Annual legislative report per Sec. 129 (26) of [Chapter 334, Laws of 2021](#) (the 2021-23 operating budget)

Acknowledgments

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Executive summary

Overview

In the 2021 biennial operating budget, the Washington State Legislature directed \$4.25 million in the 2021-23 biennium to provide youth services and young adult housing in Tacoma. Commerce awarded the contract to the Arlington Drive Youth Campus, operated by the Tacoma Housing Authority and Community Youth Services. The Arlington Drive Youth Campus is the largest housing model for youth and young adults in Pierce County and is a regional asset serving young people in crisis throughout the Puget Sound area.

Legislative mandate

This report is submitted to satisfy the reporting requirements in section 129 (26) of Chapter 334, Laws of 2021 (the [2021-23 biennial operating budget](#)):

(26) \$2,125,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$2,125,000 of the general fund—state—appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the office of homeless youth to contract with one or more nonprofit organizations to provide youth services and young adult housing on a multi-acre youth campus located in the city of Tacoma. Youth services include, but are not limited to, HOPE beds and crisis residential centers to provide temporary shelter and permanency planning for youth under the age of 18. Young adult housing includes, but is not limited to, rental assistance and case management for young adults ages 18 to 24.

The department shall submit an annual report to the legislature on the use of the funds. The first report is due June 30, 2022, and each June 30th thereafter. The report shall include but is not limited to:

- (a) A breakdown of expenditures by program and expense type, including the cost per bed;
- (b) The number of youth and young adults helped by each program;
- (c) The number of youth and young adults on the waiting list for programs, if any; and
- (d) Any other metric or measure the department deems appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the funds.

Program highlights

Expenditures

The reporting period is fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023). However, the reporting timeframe does not allow for a full report. Therefore, data will be limited to 10 months to meet the June 30, 2023, report due date:

- Spent \$1,601,355 of the state fiscal year 2023 appropriation
- Served 204 youth and young adults

Youth and young adults served

The Tacoma Housing Authority's Arlington Drive Youth Campus has a 91% success rate in discharging youth to stable housing. The average stay in the 12-bed Crisis Residential facility/HOPE Center is 15 days. Since opening, the Arlington Drive Youth Campus has:

- Housed 62 young adults (ages 18-24) and 32 of their dependent children in apartments
- Diverted 44 youth (ages 12-17) from homelessness

Background

Homelessness context in Pierce County

During its 2023 annual Point in Time Count, Pierce County Human Services¹ reported 2,148 individuals as sheltered homeless (sleeping in emergency shelters or transitional housing) or unsheltered (sleeping outside or living in places not meant for human habitation):

- 18% (392) of the individuals were youth and young adults
- 11% (226) were youth ages 13-17
- 8% (166) were young adults ages 18-24

Hundreds of Pierce County youth and young adults are homeless without family or guardians.² Many leave Pierce County because they are unable to secure stable housing locally. Additionally, many young people leave their home communities in counties outside Pierce seeking supportive services and housing. The Arlington campus is part of the regional solution to ending youth and young adult homelessness. Youth who are homeless or unstably housed face increased risks of violence, drug abuse and sex trafficking.³

Background on the Arlington Drive Youth Campus

Project overview

The Arlington Drive Youth Campus is a unique partnership between the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) and two of the nation's premier social services providers to homeless young people operating two programs:

1. Community Youth Services (CYS) operates a 12-bed Crisis Residential Center (CRC)/HOPE Center facility⁴ for homeless youth ages 12-17, providing temporary shelter, permanency planning, and family reconciliation when safe and appropriate.
2. The YMCA Social Impact Center (YSIC) operates a 58-unit Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP)⁵ that provides housing support services to young adults ages 18-24.

The CRC/HOPE Center facility opened in June 2020, and the Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP) apartments opened in October 2020.

¹ Pierce County, 2023 Homeless Point-In-Time Count, <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/4719/Homeless-Point-in-Time-PIT-Count>

² Tacoma Housing Authority, "Arlington Drive Campus for Homeless Youth and Young Adults," (July 22, 2019), https://www.tacomahousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/arlington_campus_brochure_7.22.2018.pdf

³ Smith-Grant, Jennifer, et al, "Risk Behaviors and Experiences Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness - Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 23 U.S. States and 11 School Districts, 2019," *Journal of Community Health*, (April 2022), <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10900-021-01056-2>

⁴ HOPE Centers serve youth for up to 30 days who are living on the street or another unsafe location. Youth must voluntarily self-refer and may be assisted by family, friends, schools, law enforcement, tribes, social workers, or other community based organizations. Crisis Residential Centers serve youth for up to 15 days who have run away, are experiencing family conflict, or whose health and safety may be at risk. Youth may voluntarily self-refer, be referred by law enforcement due to circumstances which constitute a danger to the youth's safety, or be referred by the Department of Children, Youth & Families, or by a court when an out-of-home placement has been approved.

⁵ The Young Adult Housing Program provides transitional housing, rental assistance and case management to help individuals age 18 through 24 who meet low income limits move towards independence and self-sufficiency.

Project funding

Capital funding

The THA acts as the landlord in this project. THA acquired \$25 million for construction costs:

- The state Legislature invested \$5 million from the capital budget
- The City of Tacoma contributed \$2.8 million
- Pierce County contributed \$670,000
- The remaining \$16.53 million came from private sources, tax credit investors, commercial debt, and the THA

Funding for services

State funding

The Legislature provided \$4.25 million in ongoing operating budget funding in the 2021-23 biennial operating budget to the Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth to provide youth services and young adult housing on a multi-acre youth campus. Commerce disbursed the first ongoing investment during the 2019-21 biennium at \$1.25 million and disbursed the next investment of \$3 million during the 2021-23 biennium, totaling \$4.25 million.

Tacoma Housing Authority rent subsidies

The THA also subsidizes the rent on the apartments at a total cost of \$1,485,543 through April 30, 2023. This subsidy ensures that young people never have to pay more than 30% of their income toward rent, often meaning they pay as little as \$75 per month. Young people who leave Arlington in good standing (that is, are not evicted) will also leave with a housing voucher they can use in the private rental market. These vouchers allow the young adult residents who do not need intensive supportive services to leave, opening up the apartment for another young person who may have a higher level of need while ensuring the previous resident can afford rent after Arlington.

Young Adult Housing Program

The Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP) has been operating at 100% capacity since February 2022. THA intentionally keeps the waitlist at 40 to 50 young people to ensure they are not waiting too long for housing and are not given false hope that housing is imminently available at the Arlington campus.

Approximately 30% of the young adult residents are also parenting babies or toddlers. Arlington is housing young adults and a new generation of children who would otherwise be homeless. The YSIC works hard with young people to bring in additional family planning and parenting resources, ensuring individuals have the support to make resourced and informed decisions in the best interest of their family.

The YSIC automated many waitlist tracking and maintenance functions and introduced a monthly update process to keep the list current. This decreased the waitlist numbers. The YSIC anticipates a full waitlist and interest list (50 each) once it refines the new process. People on the waiting list (as opposed to the interest list) have their verifying documents and paperwork complete; people on the interest list are completing such documentation.

Other helpful metrics:

- Arlington young adult clients enrolled and active in Behavioral Health Therapy: 23
- Enrollment in “LifeSet” Intense Case Management Services⁶ (Arlington residents and Pierce community):
 - Current Arlington residents being served by LifeSet: 12
 - Total LifeSet participants: 21
 - Total LifeSet participants since July 2022: 45 (39 were Arlington residents)
- Case Management services have doubled since December 2022
 - An average of 22 clients were served monthly by case management between July 2022 and November 2022
 - An average of 44 clients were served monthly by case management between December 2022 and April 2023
- Clients involved with employment services: 5 (started April 2023)
- Clients involved with YSIC-sponsored events such as workshops, community building and community partner events: 44

CRC/HOPE

CYS has spent significant time and energy rebuilding its staff team after the COVID-19 pandemic emergency measures lifted. Staffing shortages resulted from several factors and occurred throughout the child welfare system throughout the pandemic and beyond. Staffing is the primary cost of the CRC/HOPE budget. COVID-19 regulations also limited the number of participants that could be served at any given time to 50% of overall capacity. Staffing levels have increased and stabilized since the pandemic emergency measures have ended. CYS is now back to operating the full 12-bed capacity and will be able to serve up to 100% more young people in ongoing months.

⁶ "LifeSet is an individualized, evidence-informed community-based program that is highly intensive. LifeSet specialists meet with participants face to face at least once each week. They text, email and call young people regularly throughout the week, when needed. Specialists stabilize even the toughest situations and help young people build healthy relationships, obtain safe housing, education and employment. LifeSet is one of the nation's first – and now one of the largest – evidence-informed programs helping young people who age out of foster care. More than 20,000 young people have helped through LifeSet across the country since the program began in 1999." Source: Youth Villages, *WHAT IS LIFESET?*, <https://youthvillages.org/services/lifeset/>

Program expenditures and results

Timeframe

This report presents outcomes for dates of service from July 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023. The reporting timeframe does not allow for a full year's worth of data. Therefore, data is limited to ten months to meet the June 30, 2023, annual report due date. Funding for this project was allocated for July 1, 2021, through June 2023. The project is currently active.

Funding

The Legislature provided \$4.25 million (\$2.125 million each in fiscal years 2022 and 2023) in the 2021-2023 biennial operating budget to the Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth to provide youth services and young adult housing on a multi-acre youth campus.

- Community Youth Services' budget is \$894,441 (\$447,220 in fiscal year 2022, \$447,220 in fiscal year 2023). The project increased its outreach efforts to provide additional support services and to meet the needs of youth at risk of homelessness.
- YSIC's budget for the biennium is \$3,142,968 (\$1,571,484 each in fiscal years 2022 and 2023). The program is expanding LifeSet support services to include young people on the waitlist and/or those who have expressed interest in enrolling in the Arlington Campus program.
- Commerce approved additional expenses for rental assistance for young people working to secure employment. Multiple young people need this support, and the project is reviewing reimbursing employment-centered requests.

Additionally, the program identified that household items, such as furniture, mattresses, dishware, silverware and bedding, are needed for youth and young adults transitioning from homelessness to stable housing. The program adjusted its budget to address these needs.

Expenditure and results data

Table 1: Expenditure and results data by program

Result	HOPE/CRC	YAHP	Total
Total client enrollments	44	Young adults	62
		Children in residence	32
		Total	94
New clients in this period	41		15*
Waitlist (approximate)	NA**	Waitlist	32
		Interest list	25
Total clients exited	39		8***
Exits to permanent housing	22		7
Family reconciliation (under age 18 at enrollment)	9		1
Cost per bed	\$296 per bed per night	\$11,780 total per client	NA

* Three units currently being turned over – will add another five clients

** Community Youth Services has just begun keeping a waitlist. Those numbers will be reported in future reports.

*** Includes one abandonment

Table 2: Expenditure and results data by expense type, July 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023

Expenditure type	CYS (HOPE/CRC)	YMCS (YAHP)	THA
Administrative costs	\$45,296.03	\$115,003.84	\$0
Salaries and benefits	\$224,832.52	\$858,832.76	\$100,561.98
Program operations	\$11,388.79	\$100,953.82	\$0
Rental assistance and support services	\$3,336.05	\$115,016.25	\$0
Facility	\$25,972.94	\$159.90	\$0
Program expenditure	\$310,826.33	\$1,189,966.57	\$100,561.98

Data sources and methods

Homeless Management Information System

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the primary data source for measuring the success of the Arlington Drive Youth Campus. Homeless housing service providers use HMIS to collect and manage data gathered while providing housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness. Youth and young adult providers utilize HMIS to measure instances of Returns to Homelessness. The indicator for this measurement is an increase in the percentage of youth who maintain safe and stable housing. The times of measurement are six and 12 months after an individual leaves Arlington. The Young Adult Housing Program provides up to six months of aftercare to youth who have recently exited the program. There are currently over 60 measurements identified within the Youth and Young Adult Program guidelines.⁷

Contract Management System

The Contract Management System (CMS) is a data system Department of Commerce contract managers use to create, track, and maintain contract and programmatic budget and reimbursement requests. CMS provided data on program expenditures.

Narrative reports

A collection of narrative reports was used to speak to program highlights, challenges, barriers and successes within a contractual period. The Office of Homeless Youth administers Performance Progress Reports (PPR). The PPR is a methodology through which programs can speak to experiences within a project that may not be quantified within the HMIS application. Programs are required to submit a PPR quarterly.

⁷ Office of Homeless Youth, "Youth and Young Adult Program Guidelines," <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/m029gxig1ohnmej35158l1dyu6f2go6k>

Success stories

The Tacoma Housing Authority provided the following success stories. The actual names of clients were removed, and these stories have been lightly edited.

Case examples – CRC/HOPE Program

"J"

Earlier this year, we received a call from a mother who was having a hard time with her son. They were verbally fighting, rules weren't being respected, and the youth sometimes threw things. The mother was concerned for her safety and the safety of the other kids in the home. She called CYS/New Directions to ask for help. Her son arrived at the program that day and was sad about the situation at home. Over two weeks, CYS was able to work with the mom and son separately about the issues at home. After a few days, CYS had them speak together about how things can change moving forward. Initially, the youth took to the programming well with some pushback about chores and rules but soon adjusted. After two weeks, the youth visited home for meals and short outings with the family. Then, after three weeks, he spent the weekend at home and then returned home permanently a few days later. The family was able to enroll in individual and family therapy to continue working on conflict, and they identified other positive contacts in their community to lean on if there are challenging times again.

"H"

H arrived at CYS/New Directions in late January after staying at another shelter in the area. H was originally from outside the United States, and as their 18th birthday was approaching quickly, they were very concerned about getting connected with legal services. In addition, when H arrived, they were adamant about not speaking to their parent or attending school. They hadn't received medical care since arriving in the U.S. While H was at New Directions, the case managers called every agency that serves immigrant youth, provides legal immigration services, and pro bono legal services. The biggest success for H was that after getting to know them and learning their reasons for refusing school, it was easier to identify a solution. H had completed high school in their home country, so they were upset that it wasn't accepted as a diploma in the U.S., and they did not like how crowded public high schools in the area were. But when the idea of enrolling in a credit retrieval/GED program came up, H was intrigued. H was enrolled in Willie Stewart Academy, attended in-person classes daily for a few hours, and then worked on homework for hours back at the program. They were well on track for a GED when they left New Directions. New Directions also taught H independent living skills so that once they turned 18, they were more prepared. Lastly, although H did not call their parent the entire time they were with New Direction, the absolute hate and anger they felt towards them when they arrived did fall to the side a bit. H was sick for a week, and when they learned that their mom called and was very concerned, H smiled. When H was going to prepare a traditional meal for the program, they asked the case manager to call their mom to ask for a recipe and agreed to be in the room for the conversation. In addition to everything listed above, CYS also made sure H received medical care and got vaccinated so they could attend school.

Case examples – Arlington Apartments (YAHP Program)

"FA"

When FA moved into Arlington Drive in February of 2021, she had recently become emancipated from her family in California. She had nowhere to go and worked night shifts because she was homeless and going to school during the day. Once stably housed at Arlington, she was able to finish school by completing her GED. Soon after, she moved to Arlington and found out she was pregnant. She got prenatal care at Arlington and support through case management for prenatal and postpartum care. Now, FA is one quarter away from

completing her certification to become a Medical Billing Specialist. The support she received was extremely helpful as she took over the care of her younger siblings, which led her to find a new home with the voucher she received through THA and a fresh start in her new life. FA says, "We have a beautiful family and amazing home due to my case manager, Rita, and overall, the staff at the Y."

FA in her own words:

My time at Arlington has helped me into adulthood because this was the first stepping stone life gave me. I never had a support system or a lot of help at all in life, as a child, that made things extremely hard. Arlington was the first place and group of people that showed me a safe environment and gave me a chance at life. Through the support and opportunity given to me as a resident, I finished school, worked on my mental health, and gave me the first stability I have ever received.

I would tell the people who may want to cut the program funding to think in a perspective of almost anything. A 100% success rate is not typical. Not every apple on an apple tree is guaranteed to be sweet. When you look at the group of young adults you are servicing that come from hard backgrounds, you can't expect a 100% turnout. One, we're young, we are gonna make mistakes life is going to happen. But two, a lot of the time, it feels as if the world is against us, and when an opportunity is in front of us, we don't always recognize it. Some clients may make things seem not worth it but is a tree still worth planting when all the apples aren't guaranteed to be sweet? For a lot of us, this is our first opportunity, our first level of support or a safe environment. Please don't take this opportunity from potential clients.