

WA ACCELERATION FUND:

Ending Youth Homelessness Together

We've proven what works. Now we accelerate what's possible.

➤ **WASHINGTON** state is leading the nation in reducing youth homelessness by embracing new ideas, fostering collaborative public-private partnerships, and listening to young people with lived experience. Together, we've reduced youth homelessness by 40% over six years.

Washington has made incredible progress not because of one institution or program, but because something bigger is taking shape: a system built on public-private partnerships, on data, and by listening to young people and acting on their insights.

Ending youth homelessness in our state is no longer a question of possibility. It is a question of how fast we choose to get there.

The Vision Within Reach

Imagine a future where all young people have a safe and stable home. Every year, over 4.2 million young people in the country face homelessness. About half of people experiencing homelessness first experienced it as a young person, which means addressing youth homelessness is essential to preventing adult homelessness.

Here's the good news: We've shown that we can change what's possible for young people if we work together. In Washington, graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness have increased by 34%; and the number of youth exiting state systems of care into homelessness has decreased by 26%.

Today more than ever, diverse Washington communities are adopting the most rigorous, data-driven youth homelessness reduction approaches. This is a clear sign that the infrastructure for lasting, statewide progress is taking hold.

Washington's progress reflects a community-led, statewide effort. We work with state lawmakers, agency leaders, schools, community-organizations and young people. The WA Acceleration Fund is the force that builds on what's already working—and accelerates it into transformative impact, so every young person has a place to call home. *Washington can be the first state to end youth homelessness.*



Reducing youth homelessness by 40% over six years means:

10,000
more young people sleeping
safely each night.

What's the Problem?

Homelessness touches every corner of Washington—urban, suburban, and rural—and the reasons young people experience it are as varied as their stories.

Some grow up in families struggling with poverty. Others lose housing when they age out of foster care or other state systems. And for too many, the cause is rejection by their families because of who they are or who they love.

Whatever the reason, every young person deserves a supportive place to call home.

Traditional approaches to homelessness often overlook the unique needs of young people—but Washington is showing what's possible when we put them at the center.

Our Theory of Change

Our theory of change is grounded in a simple idea: lasting progress comes from partnership. Over the past decade, we worked alongside state leaders, service providers, and young people themselves to redesign the systems that prevent and respond to homelessness.

By combining research, advocacy and collaboration, we're showing what's possible when philanthropy helps connect the dots across sectors.

Each of our organizations has played a unique role in this achievement so far:

- **The Schultz Family Foundation** brought an entrepreneurial mindset, helping scale promising models and supporting youth voices in the design of new approaches.
- **The Raikes Foundation** contributed research, a national lens, legal expertise, and a willingness to innovate.
- **The Champion Foundation** leveraged nonprofit, fundraising, and policy expertise to build the statewide advocacy networks needed to transform local lessons into durable systems change.



Solutions

The Acceleration Fund will support scaling tested solutions across five key priorities:

- **Expand services** available to young people experiencing homelessness to all counties in Washington (currently 37 of 39 counties).
- **Increase access to the Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund (HPDF)** so every young person can access quick and low-cost intervention when needed. HPDF has a 93% success rate but only exists in 10 counties and is not available in King County.
- **Improve access to timely, accurate, and comprehensive data**, so local leaders can make smart decisions quickly, helping young people get timely, reliable support.
- **Enable more youth-led advocacy**, so their experiences and ideas can continue to drive real change.
- **Scale the Built for Zero model** to help communities identify and respond to every young person in crisis. This includes partnerships with schools, healthcare providers, youth organizations, and faith communities.

Our Investment Goals

We aim to raise at least \$15 million in pooled philanthropic investment over three years to accelerate the piloting, testing, and scaling of strategies that have already proven effective.

Our investments will focus on:

- 1 A complete statewide response across all counties
- 2 Flexible funding when it matters most
- 3 Better data and smarter decisions
- 4 Youth-led advocacy and leadership
- 5 Building capacity through community collaboration

What We Can Continue to Accomplish—Together

Our success so far is thanks to cross-sector, community-driven partnerships that share a deep commitment to making sure our young people rarely or briefly experience homelessness. Learn more about the Acceleration Fund and how you can get involved at accelerationfundwa.org.