

PREVENTION IS JUSTICE: TOOLS AND
FUNDING EVERY YOUTH-SERVING
PROFESSIONAL SHOULD KNOW

WHO WE ARE

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WHAT IS C4FO – COMMUNITIES FOR FUNCTIONAL ZERO

Statewide collaborative of communities committed to ending youth and young adult homelessness through the functional zero framework



Uses established benchmarks to determine if communities have effectively ended homelessness for youth and young adult populations by

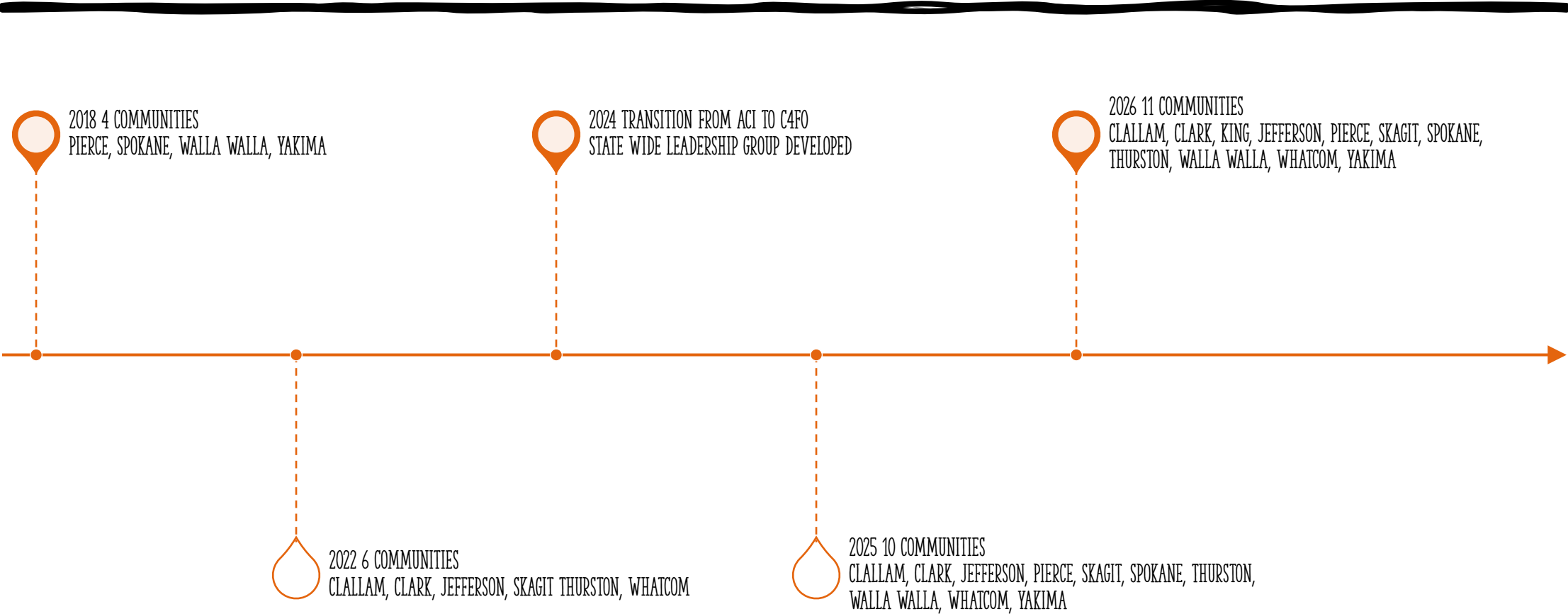
Ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and one time in WA State Communities

Community is operating with a full accounting of homelessness at all times

Community is working toward equitable systems starting with a focus on race and ethnicity

All achievements are sustained over time, even as local conditions change

HISTORY



WHAT THE DATA SAYS

System Measuring Youth Homelessness	What It Captures	Most Recent Washington Data
K-12 Schools (McKinney-Vento)	Students experiencing homelessness including couch surfing or doubled-up situations	~40,000+ students annually
Homeless Housing System (HMIS / PIT)	Youth in shelters, transitional housing, or unsheltered locations	~1,200-1,500 unaccompanied youth on a single night statewide
Young Adults (18-24) in Homeless Response System	Young adults accessing shelter, outreach, or housing programs	Several thousand annually statewide
Youth Exiting Foster Care	Young people at high risk of homelessness after leaving care	~13% experience homelessness within 1 year
Youth Exiting Juvenile Rehabilitation	Youth leaving juvenile justice systems	~21% experience homelessness or housing instability within 1 year

Youth Homelessness: What We See vs. What Exists

Visible Youth Homelessness

- Youth in Shelters
- Youth in Transitional Housing
- Unsheltered Youth Counted in PIT Count

≈ 1,200–1,500

Unaccompanied Youth
in WA on a Single Night

Hidden Youth Homelessness

- Couch Surfing with Friends
- Staying Temporarily with Family
- Motels & Unstable Situations
- Escaping Unsafe Homes

High-Risk Youth

- Exiting Foster Care
- Leaving Juvenile Justice
- LGBTQ+ Youth
- Youth Escaping Abuse

The Homeless System Only Sees the Tip of the Iceberg.

Most Youth Homelessness is Hidden & Under the Surface

WHY DIVERSION: UPSTREAM EFFORTS ARE NEEDED

- Youth and Young Adult homelessness in Washington State continues to outpace available housing
- The homelessness system needs more prevention and diversion to fully function
- Diversion is proven -
 - In 2024 96% of young people stayed housed within 3 months of being diverted
 - In 2024 93% of young people were still housed 12 months after being diverted

WHAT IS DIVERSION

- Diversion is the idea that providing people experiencing housing instability with support to creatively find housing outside of the system will mean fewer people experiencing homelessness.





Exploratory, strengths-based conversation to brainstorm practical solutions for people to resolve their experience of homelessness quickly and safely outside of the homelessness system.



Focused on helping people get past the **immediate barriers** they face in obtaining safe housing.



Generate **creative ideas** to identify realistic options for safe housing.



Housing options are identified based on the **person's own available resources** rather than those of the homeless response system.



The goal is to become housed right away (within about **30 days**).



One-time financial assistance when needed.

WHY DIVERSION

Eliminate a barrier to housing.

Create a new opportunity for housing.

Make existing housing safer or more tenable.

Resolve a conflict that was threatening housing.

Result is a client being housed permanently or temporarily outside of the homelessness system.

DIVERSION
ALLOWS US TO

CENTER JUSTICE IN
SERVICES

HONOR STRENGTHS

EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES

BE CREATIVE



WHAT DO YOU SEE

- Research shows that YYA distrust of systems is not teenage resistance but rather a response to past harm
- Start with POWER AWARENESS not rapport building
- Predictability and Follow through are a MUST
- Curiosity over Compliance
- Normalize the distrust
- Offer real choices not performative choices
- Gather data over time not all at once
- Rapport Building before Interventions
- What is the distrust communicating
- Be transparent about the limits of the system
- Expect trust to be non linear

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUTH

ADULTISM

Diversion only works if youth trust you enough to tell the truth

Adultism = the assumption that adults know better than young people

In practice it sounds like:

- when I was your age
- you should be grateful,
- you just need to

In systems it looks like:

- Decisions made about youth, not with them
- compliance over collaboration
- services tied to behavior instead of need

ADULTISM TO PARTNERSHIP

Instead of ...	Try....
You need to call your family	What feels possible right now?
That's not safe	What feels unsafe about this?
Here's what we can do	Want to look at options together
Why didn't you	What got in the way
You cannot be picky right now	What about this option does not feel workable
Family is always the best option	Who in your life feels even a little safer than the others
That is not what the funding is for	Help me understand the importance of this right now
You need to show up if you want help	What got in the way of connecting last time
That is just how the system works	What concerns you most about this situation
You are making this harder on yourself	What made that feel like the best option at the time

**Questions
Young
People
Like**

1

What do you think is important for me to know about you?

2

Can you remember a time when you had safe stable housing? What was different then?

3

I know your housing is an issue for you right now – what is going well for you?

4

What is one small thing that you feel would make a big difference for you?

THE TOOLS - DIVERSION CONVERSATION

the
D i v e r s i o
n
C o n v e r s

- Engage
- Understand the Situation
- Generate Possibilities
- Explore those Possibilities
- Make the Plan(s)

GENERATE POSSIBILITIES

Jordan, 16

Jordan is currently placed in a foster home through DCYF but has been running away due to ongoing conflict in the home. They have been staying intermittently with friends and are at risk of being placed in a group home if a more stable option is not identified. Jordan wants to stay in their current school and maintain their part-time job.

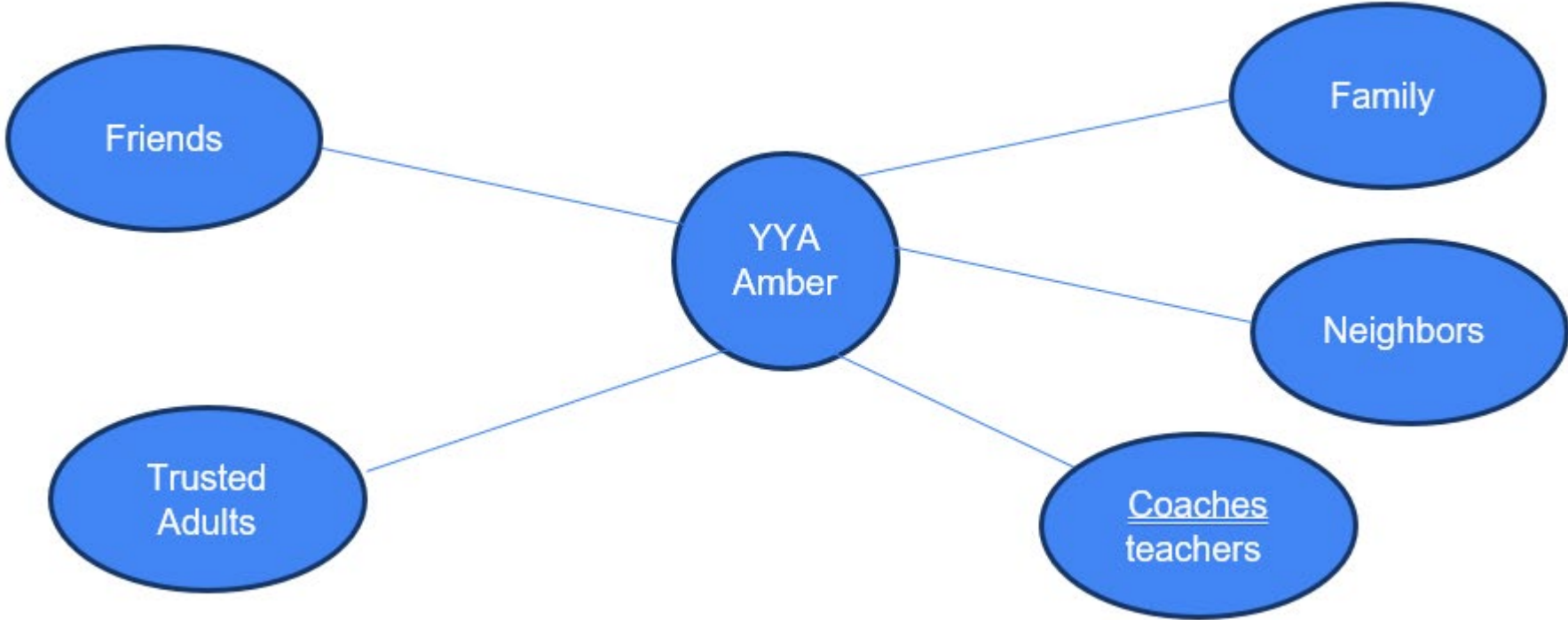
Kayla, 17

Kayla is pregnant and currently staying with a friend after being asked to leave her family home. She is connected to school and wants to finish, but the friend's family has said the arrangement is temporary. She is not yet connected to any parenting or housing resources.

Luis, 18

Luis was recently released from juvenile detention and is on probation. He cannot return home due to conflict with his stepfather. He is motivated to stay on track, has enrolled in GED classes, and is working part-time, but needs a stable and approved living situation that meets probation requirements.

THE TOOLS - HOUSING STABILITY BRAINSTORM



OTHER TOOLS

- Diversion Conversation Cheat Sheet
- Housing Plan Toolkit
 - Barrier Buster Worksheet
 - Circle of Support
 - What Would Make this Work
 - Housing Stability Plan

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUTH EXECUTE THEIR PLAN

Be	Be invested in their success!
Get	Get as much done as you can in the meeting.
Give	Give them an outline of the process on your end.
Clarify	Clarify next steps (including any tasks and when they need to happen by)
Confirm	Confirm contact info and set a next time to check in.
Keep	Keep the momentum up and follow through!

WHAT IS HPDF

- The Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund is a fund that allows youth serving providers to access flexible funds on behalf of young people to help stabilize housing.
- Program that is in the community and not a community program - youth do not need to go to a different agency
- Can pay for almost anything that results in housing outside the homelessness system within about 30 days
 - Make existing housing safer or more tenable
 - A new housing opportunity or family reunification
 - Eliminating a barrier to housing
 - Creativity is encouraged

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Client must be 12–24 years old

Currently reside in Pierce, Clark, Spokane, Yakima, or Walla Walla Counties

Unaccompanied or AT RISK of becoming unaccompanied

Experiencing a housing crisis

HOW DO YOU MAKE IT WORK

- Have diversion conversations with clients - Remember that all communication with the client and involved parties (Property Management/Landlord) is done through you
- Prepare all needed documentation
- Complete a Fund Request on Forward and Email All Required Documents to the Fiscal Admin
- Assist with follow through as needed to ensure payment gets where it needs to go
- Support young person with follow up if needed

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

Eligible costs/expenses may include (but are not limited to):

- Security deposits
- One-time rent payments or other move-in costs
- Payments for background and credit checks
- Fees for securing vital documents
- Transportation, including gift cards for gas, bus/airline tickets for both local transport and to facilitate relocation to verifiable, safe housing out-of-the-area
- Previous housing debt/rental arrears
- Utility (or pet) deposits and arrears
- Cost to repair a vehicle if it is directly tied to a housing solution
- Employment supplies/tools, tests, licenses, certifications, etc.
- Food or utility assistance that can be used to secure housing with a friend/relative

HOW TO ACCESS HPDF

- If you serve youth and young adults in these Washington counties



- Contact Julius Henrichsen at Building Changes to learn how to connect : Julius.Henrichsen@BuildingChanges.org

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES ACROSS THE STATE THAT MAY HELP

- YDIP - Youth Diversion Infrastructure Program
- WYFF - Washington Youth and Families Fund
- CHG - Consolidated Homeless Grant
- ESG - Emergency Solutions Grant
- HSYNC - Housing Support for Youth In Courts

WE ALL HAVE A PART IN ENDING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT HOMELESSNESS

Diversion is not a program - it's a practice.

It happens in:

- Courtrooms
- Schools
- Clinics
- Community organizations
- Living rooms

Let's Work as a System

- Use HPD F & YD IP as shared tools
- Engage in case conferencing & By-Name List when appropriate
- Stay connected to local diversion access points



THANK YOU AND PLEASE REACH OUT
