

## Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot

Year Two Update: 2SSB 5800 Pilot Program

### Washington students are facing growing housing insecurity and homelessness

Housing and food insecurity are critical barriers that undermine persistence and completion rates for postsecondary students.<sup>1</sup> Around the country, public health and economic crises increased the number of students experiencing financial hardship and instability.<sup>2</sup> In Washington, college students face significant challenges meeting their basic needs while completing their credentials with disproportionate impacts on students of color and students with marginalized identities and circumstances such as LGBTQ2+, former foster care and students with dependents.<sup>3</sup>

### How common is food and housing insecurity for Washington students?

Students attending Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot institutions reported high levels of unmet basic needs.

Institution	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness
Eastern Washington University*	33%	41%	22%
Western Washington University	39%	49%	19%
Edmonds College	39%	51%	19%
South Puget Sound Community College	43%	53%	21%
Walla Walla Community College**	38%	37%	17%
Yakima Valley College	48%	59%	18%

\* EWU used Active Minds Survey; all others used #RealCollege Survey from Hope Center for College, Community and Justice.

\*\* WWCC data is from spring and fall quarters 2020; all other prevalence data provided here is from fall quarter 2019.

*I really needed this time to feel safe and somewhere to call home until I found a forever home. This was a great program to get me and my son back on our feet in the midst of a terrible time in our story.*  
Student, SPSCC

*(SSEH) has enabled me to focus on my studies rather than worrying about paying my rent. It made me realize that I am able to pursue nursing even after a long break from school.*  
Student, Edmonds College

### Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot

The Washington Student Achievement Council and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges administer the **Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) Pilot** ([2SSB 5800](#) from the 2019 legislative session). The SSEH Pilot builds support systems for students facing homelessness on six public college and university campuses: **Eastern Washington University, Edmonds College, South Puget Sound Community College, Walla Walla Community College, Western Washington University, and Yakima Valley College.**

With SHB 1166 (2021), the SSEH Pilot expanded to include six additional campuses beginning in 2021-2022: Clark College, The Evergreen State College, Highline College, Lower Columbia College, Washington State University, and Wenatchee Valley College.

### What are the initial student outcomes in the pilot?

**413 students** experiencing homelessness or who have “aged out” of the foster care system have been served in two years.

**99%** of university students and **86%** of college students completed the quarter in which they received SSEH services.

*Not living out of a car with two kids is such a relief that I cannot begin to explain.*  
Student, WWU

<sup>1</sup> “Food Insecurity: Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits.” 2018. United States Government Accountability Office. Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696254.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Goldrick-Rab, Vanessa Coca, Gregory Kienzl, Carrie R. Welton, Sonja Dahl, Sarah Megnelia. “#RealCollege During the Pandemic: New Evidence on Basic Needs Insecurity And Student Well-Being.” The Hope Center. Accessed November 1, 2019. [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hopecenter\\_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic\\_Reupload.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hopecenter_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic_Reupload.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> “Washington State Community And Technical Colleges #RealCollege Survey.” February 2020. Accessed November 1, 2019. [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019\\_WashingtonState\\_Report.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019_WashingtonState_Report.pdf)

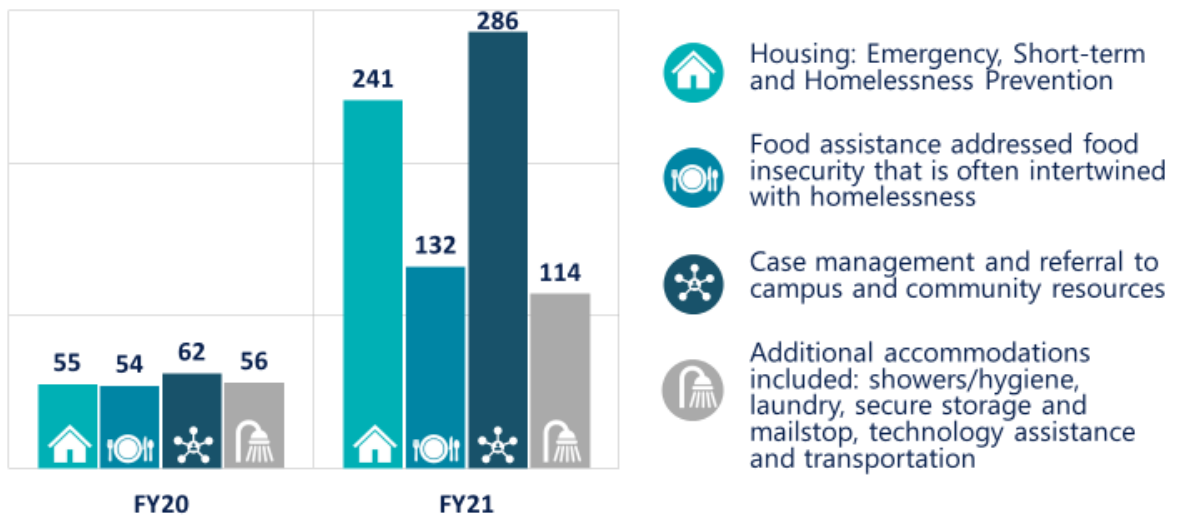
## Second Year of the SSEH pilot: Student highlights

- **More than half of all served were students of color**, exceeding each institutions' proportions of students of color. This reflects national and state data that show Hispanic/Latinx, Black/African American and Native American/Alaska Native students are disproportionately experiencing homelessness and housing security.
- **Food insecurity** was common, with 58% of students served reporting marginal, low, or very low food security.
- **Nearly two thirds of students identified as female.**
- **Community college students served tended to be older**, with 68% over 25 years of age, while the majority of university students served were under 25 years of age (85%).
- **Students served persisted at high rates**, with 98% of university students and 85% of community college students completing the quarter in which they received services.

## What kinds of accommodations and services are the SSEH Pilot institutions providing?

The SSEH Pilot institutions had just begun to identify and serve students in February 2020 when the institutions had to quickly pivot to remote operations because of the state's COVID-19 mitigation measures. They modified their plans, employed rigorous safety protocols, and implemented several critical accommodations to support postsecondary students experiencing homelessness. Although the state's eviction moratorium was in effect from February 2020 through October 2021, SSEH Pilot institutions still saw a significant increase in need for housing support and case management services. With the moratorium expiration, SSEH Pilot institutions are reporting even more students are seeking these supports.

## Accommodations and Services Provided by SSEH Pilot Institutions



## How is the SSEH Pilot leading Washington's basic needs efforts?

**Pilot campuses are focusing on adaptive solutions to support students experiencing homelessness, sharing effective practices, and improving Washington's understanding of addressing postsecondary students' basic needs.**

- Campuses statewide are sharing effective practices and partnerships through a quarterly learning community with over 500 participants since summer 2020.
- To gather data on postsecondary unmet basic needs, SSEH partners are piloting a new Washington assessment this year. If all institutions participate in fall 2022, Washington will have state data on the prevalence of unmet needs.
- Pilot campuses are serving increasing numbers of students as the institutions solidify improvements in campus coordination, communication, and external partnerships.

The continuation of funding and systems change efforts will increase postsecondary credential attainment among vulnerable students, enhancing the state's efforts to ensure an equitable economic recovery.

**For more information about the Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot:**

Ami Magisos, Assistant Director Policy, [Amim@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:Amim@wsac.wa.gov) and Jessica Porter, Program Administrator, [JPorter@sbctc.edu](mailto:JPorter@sbctc.edu)