

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) Pilot

Year Three Update: 2SSB 5800/SHB 1166 Pilot Program

Washington students face growing housing insecurity and homelessness

Basic needs insecurity is a critical barrier to student success. Housing and food insecurity undermine persistence and completion rates for postsecondary students.¹ Around the country, public health and economic crises have increased the number of students experiencing financial hardship and instability.² In Washington, college students face significant challenges to meeting their basic needs while completing their credentials. Students of color and students who experience marginalization based on their identities and circumstances—such as LGBTQ+ students, former foster youth, and students with dependents—are disproportionately impacted.³

To address this need, the Washington Legislature enacted the **Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) Pilot** with [2SSB 5800](#) (2019) and then expanded it with [SHB 1166](#) (2021). The SSEH Pilot provides grants to colleges to build systems to identify and support students facing homelessness and students who aged out of the foster care system.

“(SSEH) has been instrumental in me getting out of the shelter and finding my own place to live. Without them and their help I would not have been able to continue school.”
Student, Highline College

The Washington Student Achievement Council and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges have administered the pilot, initially with six public colleges and universities, and with six additional institutions in 2021-22.

| 2019 Pilot Institutions | 2021 Additional Pilot Institutions |
|--|---|
| Eastern Washington University, Edmonds College, South Puget Sound Community College, Walla Walla Community College, Western Washington University, Yakima Valley College | Clark College, The Evergreen State College, Highline College, Lower Columbia College, Washington State University, Wenatchee Valley College |

How common is food and housing insecurity for Washington students?

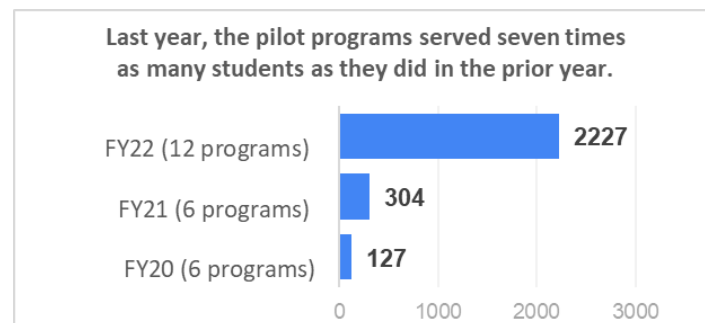
Students attending pilot institutions reported high levels of unmet basic needs:

| Average proportion of the student body experiencing... | Housing insecurity | Homelessness | Food insecurity |
|--|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | 48% | 19% | 38% |

Source data: EWU used Active Minds Survey; all others #RealCollege Survey from Hope Center. All data is from fall 2019, except SPSCC, WWCC, WSU and Evergreen, which are from 2020.

A full state picture of basic needs insecurity prevalence will be available in January. With the leadership of the SSEH pilot, nearly all Washington public institutions are voluntarily participating in a new Washington assessment on the prevalence of basic needs insecurity. This is the first such cross-sector state assessment in the nation.

What are the cumulative student outcomes in three years of the pilot?



2,658 students experiencing homelessness or who have “aged out” of the foster care system have been served by SSEH in three years.

91% of baccalaureate students and **85%** of CTC students completed the quarter in which they received SSEH services.

¹ “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>

² 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

³ “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

Third Year of the SSEH pilot: FY 2022 Student highlights

- **45% of all served were students of color**, matching or exceeding each institution's 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 82% of served students reporting marginal, low, or very low food security. Only 39% of students served were known to be recipients of WA Basic Food or SNAP.
- **Nearly two thirds of students identified as female.**
- **Community college students served tended to be older**, with 63% over 24 years of age, while the majority of university students served were under 24 years of age (68%).

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

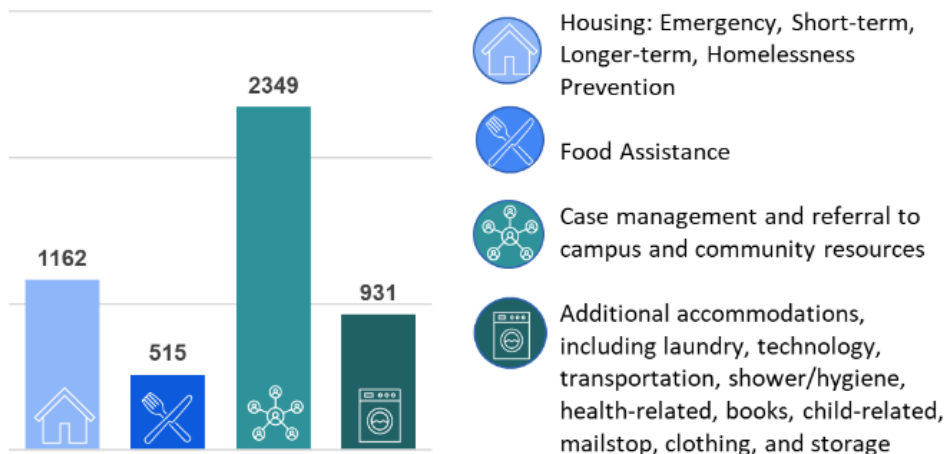
As the pilot matures, the institutions have improved campus coordination, student awareness of the program, and referral systems, which have increased requests for program assistance.

"Without the support to secure housing, I would still be homeless. I am now able to focus on classes."
Student, WWCC

Community organizations are integral partners in the pilot. In FY22, SSEH case managers made **3,357 referrals to external agencies and programs**, such as local food pantries, 211 Washington, WA Connection, Community Action Councils, United Way, Housing Authorities, Worksource, DSHS, nonprofit housing support programs, and domestic violence services.

Yet pilot institutions continue to see an increase in need for housing support and case management services. The state's eviction moratorium ended in October 2021. Federal COVID relief programs—which provided financial assistance to both students and student support services during the first two years of the pilot—have also concluded. These changes have placed more pressure on SSEH pilot funding and community referrals to fill the need gap.

FY22 Number of Accommodations provided by SSEH Pilots



"The assistance - and consistent and considerate follow-up and communication, expertise and resources - literally saved my life."
Student, SPSCC

"(SSEH) helped me to keep a roof over my head, provide food and basic needs that I had as a student."
Student, Evergreen

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

With the loss of federal pandemic funds and the eviction moratorium, pilot campuses are focusing on adaptive solutions to support students experiencing homelessness and are sharing effective practices in quarterly learning communities.

A legislative proviso during the 2022 Supplemental session expanded the pilot; FY23 now includes 21 additional public institutions. **Ongoing funding and systems change efforts will increase postsecondary credential attainment among vulnerable students, enhancing the state's efforts to ensure an equitable recovery.**

For more information about the Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot:

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