

Evaluation of the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative: Six-Month Findings

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Executive Summary

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative, developed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been providing funding and support to three counties in the Pacific Northwest since 2009 to reform their homeless housing and service delivery systems for families. The overall goal of the Initiative is to reduce family homelessness in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems. The key targeted outcomes are reducing the length of time families experience homelessness and decreasing returns to homelessness.

Westat, a national research organization, is conducting a longitudinal outcome evaluation to examine the effects of the systems changes on the experiences and outcomes of families served. This report provides interim six-month evaluation findings based on an analysis of the outcomes of families served after system reform compared to outcomes of families served prior to reform.

Findings from this six-month comparison provide early evidence that system changes have occurred and are affecting the nature of assistance received by families and their access to housing. Key findings are as follows:

- All three counties have shifted from uncoordinated continuums to coordinated systems with a Housing First orientation.
- The system has shifted from a *“one size fits all”* approach to one offering a range of housing assistance options, including direct placement into housing, tailored to families’ needs.
- The Housing First orientation has led to greater and quicker access to permanent housing and more days in that housing, despite a tightening housing market.
- Access to and duration in permanent housing, time spent homeless, and other outcomes do not significantly vary between African American and white families, adjusting for other characteristics.¹
- After systems reform, families continue to experience many of the same challenges in entering the system as they did prior to reform and wait similarly long periods of time before receiving homeless assistance.
- Parent-child intactness, child absenteeism, employment, income, and the rate of school moves during the six months following receipt of initial assistance in the system do not appear to have been affected by systems reform.

The findings provide early evidence that system changes are affecting the nature of housing assistance received and access to housing. Forthcoming analyses of the families’ outcomes at 18 months after receiving initial assistance will provide an understanding of the extent to which families continue to enter permanent housing at a greater rate after systems reform than before it and the extent to which they stay housed. In addition, in future analyses, we will examine longer-term changes in parent-child intactness, child absenteeism and school moves, employment, and income and the role that housing may play in mediating those changes.

¹ We will be exploring the role of race and ethnicity in families’ experiences and outcomes in a separate set of analyses.

Section I: Introduction

Background

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative, developed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (referred to throughout the report as “the Foundation”), is a \$60 million comprehensive systems change intervention launched in 2009 in response to the persistent number of families experiencing homelessness in the Puget Sound Area and the difficulty they experience in successfully exiting homelessness. The overall goal of the Initiative is to reduce family homelessness in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties by improving the coordination of the family homeless housing and service delivery systems and their efficiency and effectiveness. The key targeted outcomes are reducing the length of time families experience homelessness and decreasing returns to homelessness.

Westat, a national research organization, is conducting a longitudinal evaluation of the Initiative. Initiated in 2009, the evaluation is designed to examine the implementation of the Initiative, its effects on systems changes, and the effects of those changes on families’ experiences and outcomes and on the costs of serving families. By design, the evaluation is highly formative, with many opportunities built in for sharing findings and feedback to the Foundation; Building Changes, the Initiative’s intermediary organization, and the individual counties. This report is offered in the spirit of interim feedback, providing early findings from a six-month review of the effects of systems changes on families.

After a brief overview of the evaluation design and methods, the report describes the Homeless Families Systems Initiative and highlights the systems reforms efforts that have been put into place and the changes that have taken place, as well as the changes that have taken place in the overall national, state, and local context that could affect the implementation and outcomes of the system reforms. The report then focuses on the changes between two cohorts of families served in the three counties before and after systems reform. We examine changes in the demographic, background, and other characteristics of families served (Section II); the nature of assistance received by families (Section III); and early changes in homelessness and housing outcomes, parent-child intactness, employment, and income, as well as children’s school absenteeism and stability (Section IV). We conclude in Section V with implications of the findings, limitations to consider, and next steps in the analysis. Throughout the document, we strive to define terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Appendix A also includes a glossary of key terms used in the report.

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation is a mixed-methods (using both qualitative and quantitative data), longitudinal, quasi-experimental study examining how the Initiative is creating changes over time in the systems that serve families experiencing homelessness and how these changes affect the experiences and outcomes of the families. The evaluation is designed to address four broad evaluation questions:

1. How is the Initiative being implemented?
2. How is the Initiative effecting changes in the systems of housing and service delivery for homeless families and the organizations that serve them?

3. What effect is this Initiative having on families' experiences, housing access and duration, family stability, and children's school-related experiences?
4. What are the costs of serving a family in a coordinated system (after systems reform) compared to the status quo?

The study design has several components to address the study questions:

- **A comparative case study** design of the systems involves annual evaluation site visits to the three Initiative counties as well as ongoing document review and contacts with the Initiative leads in each of the counties and others involved in the sites (such as Building Changes staff) to track both the implementation of the Initiative and changes in the system. For the two contrast sites, we are conducting three visits as well as document review to provide some perspective on how other communities might be changing without the Initiative but with local, state, and federal funding and guidance. The analysis of the three demonstration counties with the contrast counties is intended to provide a perspective on whether there is a distinction in the changes that are being made through the Initiative, especially since many of the changes pushed by the Initiative are also being pushed nationally.
- **Seven organizational case studies**, involving annual visits and document reviews, are being conducted with housing and other organizations in each county to track how the system is affecting their culture and operations.
- **A family impact study** is examining the impact of the changes in the systems on families by comparing the experiences and outcomes of a cohort of families that were served through one of the three systems prior to the systems being reformed with the experiences and outcomes of a cohort of families served after the systems were reformed. The study involves primary data collection over 18 months² from the two cohorts of families as well as analysis of existing administrative data from Washington State's Integrated Client Database (ICDB), a database operated by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) that integrates data on families from divisions within DSHS as well as other departments within Washington State. The ICDB is also being used in three ways: (1) to construct comparison groups of families from non-initiative counties in

Evaluation Design and Methods

Comparative Case Study Design for Systems Change

Three Initiative Counties

- Annual site visits/key informant interviews
- Document and data reviews
- Periodic interviews

Two Contrast Counties

(1 in-state and 1 out-of-state)

- Periodic site visits
- Document and data reviews

Organizational Case Studies

- Annual site visits/key informant interviews/focus groups with families
- Document reviews

Family Impact Study

- Comparison of Baseline cohort of families with Intervention cohort of families using primary data collected at four points over 18 months and supplemented with data from WA State's ICDB
- Comparison of each cohort with a constructed comparison group of families from the balance of the state using the WA State ICDB
- Descriptive 30-month follow-up of Cohort 2 shelter and rapid re-housing families

Cost Implications of Systems Change

- Examination of cost shifts and cost savings following systems change

² For Cohort 2 only, an additional 30-month follow-up interview is being conducted with families that received either shelter or rapid re-housing as their initial homeless assistance.

Washington State at the two time points of the two cohorts, to examine changes over time in families' experiences and outcomes in non-initiative counties that may happen due to other events and normal secular trends; (2) to examine the size of the complete population of families entering the system over the course of the Initiative to understand the volume of families entering the system; and (3) to examine the population's characteristics, systems use, and outcomes to provide greater understanding of how the overall population fares as well as how our cohorts represent this more complete population.

- **A cost study** using data from the ICDB and other sources is compare the costs of serving a family in the system before and after systems reform.

The focus of this report is on the experiences and outcomes of families entering the system and six months after receiving initial homeless assistance, comparing the cohort of families in the system after reform (Cohort 2) with the cohort of families in the system prior to reform (Cohort 1) as measured by the primary data collection. We provide below a more in-depth description of the family impact study to provide greater detail on the study design, data collection, and types of analyses used for the six-month outcomes. Appendix B provides a more detailed description of the complete study.

Family Impact Study Methodology Design: Family outcomes are being assessed through a longitudinal quasi-experimental design in which an “intervention” cohort of families (referred to as Cohort 2) is compared with a “baseline comparison” cohort (referred to as Cohort 1). The intervention cohort of families was selected after reforms were made to the systems in the three counties and compared to a baseline cohort of families served in the systems prior to reform. The key research questions involved determining the impact of the system on the experiences and outcomes of families receiving homeless assistance. We aimed to recruit as close to a “census” of families receiving homeless services as possible for each cohort, with a goal of recruiting at least 150 families in each county for each cohort. Families receiving assistance in both cohorts were eligible to be included in the study if (1) they had at least one minor child and/or were pregnant and (2) they were able to complete an interview in English or Spanish. It is important to note that our study is focused only on families who **received** some type of homeless assistance in each cohort. We could not track families in Cohort 1 who were turned away because there was not capacity in the shelters nor could we track families in Cohort 2 who went through coordinated entry in each county (described in sections to follow) but who may not have been able to receive assistance.

Cohort 1 families were recruited between November 2010 and August 2012. Because shelter and transitional housing were the two major options available for homelessness assistance for families during this time (with shelter being the primary source of first assistance), we worked directly with shelter and transitional housing providers in each county to identify and recruit families.

Cohort 2 families were recruited between May 2015 and November 2016. The primary point of first assistance was no longer limited to shelter. Therefore, we worked with providers providing one or more of the types of assistance available—including shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing (or permanent housing with supports), and diversion or navigation services—to

identify and recruit families. Specifics on how we engaged providers in the study and obtained consent to contacts forms from families are provided in Appendix B.

Data Collection: Data are collected from families in each cohort over time through in-depth in-person interviews with the head of household (HoH) in each family, beginning with a baseline interview conducted as close to initial receipt of homeless assistance as possible, followed by interviews at 6, 12, and 18 months following receipt of the initial homeless assistance. We typically collected data from the family HoH; if there was more than one parent or guardian in the family, we selected the person who was most knowledgeable about all family members, typically the mother. (For each description, we refer to all respondents in the evaluation as the families' HoHs). We collected some basic descriptive information on all family members and more detailed information on one child, selected at random from among children between 2 and 18, living with the respondent at the time of selection. The selection strategy gave preference to a school-aged child if one was present in the household. Families were provided an incentive for each completed interview. In Cohort 1, families received \$20 for the baseline interview and \$30 for follow-up interviews. In Cohort 2, families received \$30 for the baseline and six-month interview and \$50 for subsequent interviews. Sample size for the baseline and six-month samples are presented in Table 1.

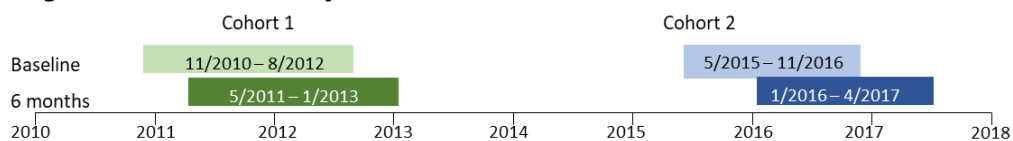
Characteristics of the cohorts presented in Section II and systems effects on families' experiences entering the system in Section III are based on the complete baseline sample, whereas outcome analyses in Section IV are limited to the sample of families that completed a six-month interview. Future analyses will include additional waves of primary data as well as measures from Washington State's ICDB.

Table 1. Family Impact Study Sample Sizes

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Total
Baseline sample	467	504	971
6-Month sample % of baseline	392 (84%)	370 (73%)	762 (78%)

Figure 1 provides a timeline for the baseline and six-month data collection for each cohort. The goal was to

Figure 1. Data Collection for Cohorts 1 and 2



complete the baseline interview within two months of the family's receipt of the initial homeless assistance and the six-month interview, between six and seven months following receipt of initial homeless assistance. For some families that were harder to locate for interviews, these timelines may be extended (see more detail in Appendix B).

Analysis: We constructed propensity score weights (Freedman & Berk, 2008) to address any non-equivalence of the cohorts. Propensity score weighting is a statistical adjustment to control for any

selection biases in non-experimental studies. We included the use of these weights in our analyses of the two cohorts in an effort to eliminate or reduce the influence of family or HoH characteristics on outcomes in order to isolate the role that the systems changes have on the outcomes that families experience. The results of that weighting and the balance are presented in Appendix B.

Analyses, as described in Table 2, include both descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive analyses include both frequency and bivariate analyses. Inferential analyses, designed to explain differences in outcome variables, include several multivariate analyses, such as ordinary least squares regression, logistic regression, multinomial logistic regression, and survival analysis. The inferential analytic models used test for the effect of cohort on the outcomes and included a host of family and HoH characteristics to control on individual differences. Regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between number of weeks to receive assistance, number of nights in housing in the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance, number of nights homeless, and monthly income. Logistic regression was used to examine parent-child intactness (e.g., all children were living with the family), employment status, and children's chronic absenteeism and school stability. Multinomial logistic regression was used to examine factors that related to the type of initial homeless assistance families received in Cohort 2. Survival analysis was used to examine factors that predict time to accessing housing.

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative

To guide the Initiative, the Foundation developed a Theory of Action (Figure 2) in 2009, based on the best thinking and available research at the time on what can help end family homelessness. One of the research studies that influenced the theory involved research on public shelter utilization in four jurisdictions (Culhane et al., 2007), which showed that most families resolved homelessness quickly, and that for those that did not, policy and program factors rather than families' characteristics predicted those stays. The research produced a typology of family homelessness in which a majority of families (over 70%) stayed in shelters for a relatively brief period of time and did not return; approximately a fifth had relatively

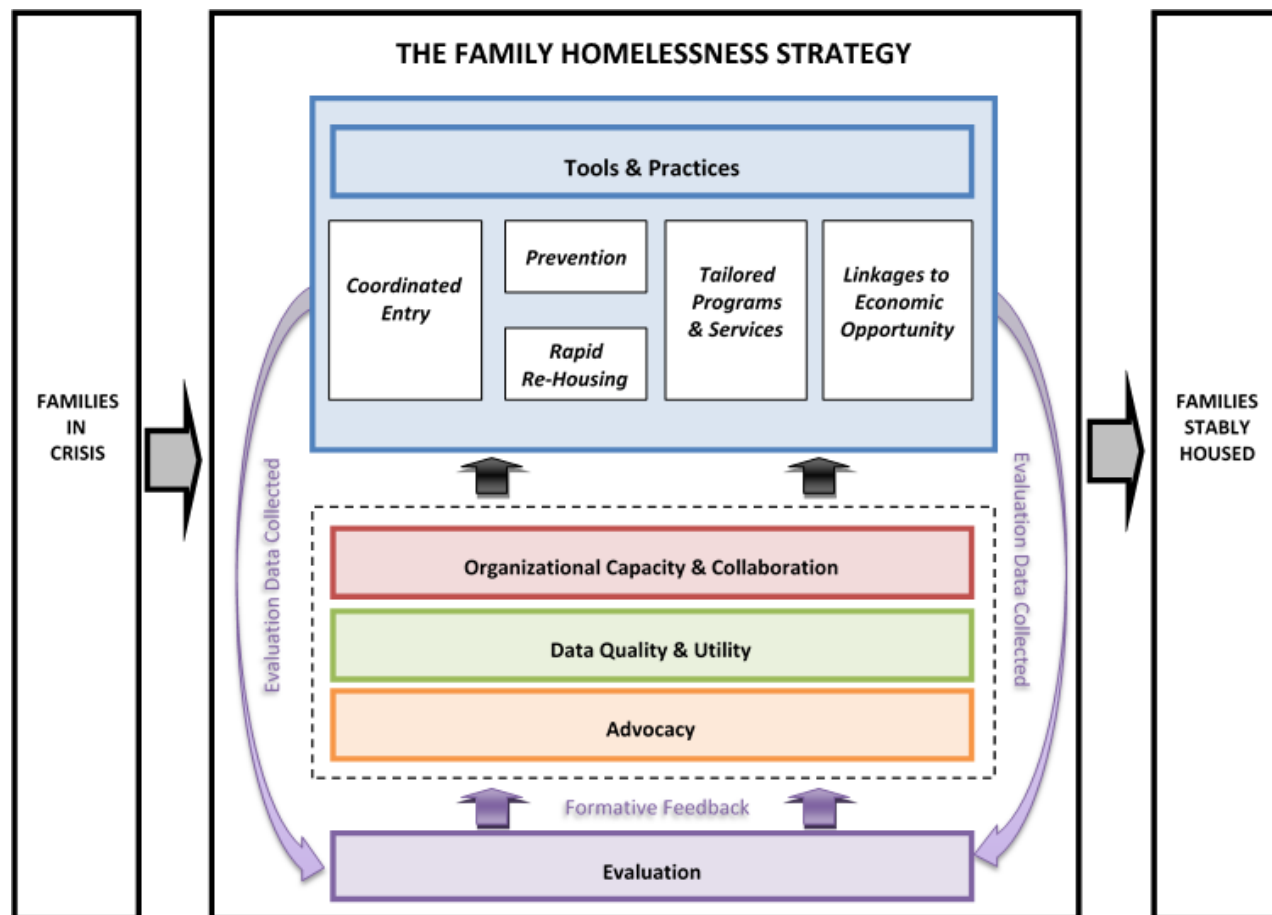
Table 2. Types of Analyses Performed

Descriptive Analyses	
Frequency distribution	Examines the distribution of a variable for range, measures of central tendency (average, median), outliers, and extent to which there are missing data.
Bivariate analysis	Examines the relationship between two variables, using chi-squares and t-tests to test for significant differences (such as between cohort and family characteristics).
Inferential Multivariate Analyses	
Ordinary least squares regression	Tests the effect of cohort on differences in continuous or interval measures (such as nights in housing and monthly income), controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.
Logistic regression	Tests the effect of cohort on differences in dichotomous variables (such as employment status), controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.
Multinomial logistic regression	Tests the effect of cohort on differences in variables with more than two discrete outcomes (such as type of initial homeless assistance received), controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.
Survival analysis	Tests the effect of cohort on time (such as time to accessing housing). This approach models (1) the probability of moving to permanent housing and (2) how long it takes to move, controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.

longer shelter stays, and a small percentage (2-8%) experienced short repeated stays. The findings underscored the transitory nature of homelessness, and the need to address it as a temporary state for families rather than an enduring trait.

The Theory of Action outlines five strategies believed to be important in creating a sustainable systemic response to the varied needs of families that could more effectively and efficiently reduce family homelessness. The first strategy, **Tools and Practices**, outlines five key pillars of practice to prevent families from entering the homeless system when possible and to help families experiencing homelessness access assistance, rapidly exit into housing in the community, and access needed services and economic opportunities. The four additional strategies highlight support activity believed to be important for systems to change, including **Organization Capacity and Collaboration**, **Data Quality and Utility**, **Advocacy**, and **Evaluation**.

Figure 2. Family Homelessness Systems Initiative Theory of Action



The leadership for the Initiative's implementation comes from the Foundation, a regional intermediary, and county government. In addition to its primary role as initial and primary strategic investor, the

Foundation plays several roles in the Initiative. Foundation staff have worked with the intermediary, especially in the first stage of the Initiative, in co-managing the activity and co-convening groups locally, statewide, and nationally. The Foundation has supported numerous activities to learn from others through visits to specific communities where a practice is in place, inviting site representatives or experts to come to the Puget Sound to present to the counties, and attending conferences and other trainings. Additionally, it serves as an advocate to push for needed reforms at the local, state, and federal levels and plays critical roles in gap filling, bridge building, and problem resolution through its support of advocacy, convenings, and knowledge generation activities.

In 2009, the Foundation designated and funded Building Changes, a non-profit organization based in Seattle, Washington, as the Initiative's intermediary organization. Building Changes co-manages the Initiative with key Foundation staff and acts as an agent of change through re-granting Foundation funds, building the capacity of organizations through the provision of on-going support and technical assistance, providing an opportunity for individuals to network by convening meetings and groups, and advocating for policy changes at state and local levels to support the Initiative.

Government agencies in each county have been designated as county leads and funded through the Initiative to be responsible for planning, implementing, and guiding the work that is occurring "on the ground." In King County, the designated county lead agency is All Home, Seattle/King County's coordinating agency for homelessness. The initial funding was with the Housing and Community Development Program within the Seattle-King County Department of Community and Human Services and was moved to the Committee to End Homelessness (now called All Home) in 2013. In Pierce County, the Department of Human Services leads the Initiative. The homeless families initiative plan was developed in collaboration with the Department of Community Services. In Snohomish County, the Initiative was originally housed in and led by the Workforce Development Council of Snohomish County and was moved to the County Department of Human Services, Office of Community and Homeless Services in 2013.

All three counties were provided up to \$200,000 to support a three-phase planning process,³ including a landscape assessment phase, a strategy development phase, and an implementation planning phase, that culminated in a tailored approach to addressing the strategy initiatives outlined in the Theory of Action. The counties' final plans were approved by the Foundation in October and November of 2010.

To support the counties' work, each county receives annual system infrastructure support from the Foundation. The infrastructure grants, with cumulative totals of approximately \$3.0 million for Pierce County, \$3.4 million for Snohomish County, and \$4.0 million for King County between 2010 and 2018, are administered directly by the Foundation to the county lead organizations and are intended to support one-time expenditures necessary for the implementation of the county plans. There were no requirements for the counties to match the infrastructure funds with other public resources.

³ King County received an additional \$100,000 from the United Way of King County to support this planning process.

The counties also receive System Innovation Grants (SIGs) from Building Changes. Throughout the span of the Initiative, Building Changes received a total of \$30 million from the Foundation to re-grant as SIGs. The SIGs are intended to support targeted investments to the county lead organizations and providers to support the implementation of the pillars. Examples include investments in staff and training for coordinated entry; pilot tests of diversion and rapid re-housing projects; and design and implementation of employment initiatives, such as employment navigators. In order to receive these funds, applicants had to match each SIG dollar with \$2.50 of public funds.⁴ Between 2010 and 2018, 150 SIG grants have been provided, totaling \$25.3 million (\$10.5 million for King, \$7.1 million for Pierce, and \$7.7 million for Snohomish)⁵. Appendix C provides a table outlining the amount and areas of investment in each county.

Throughout the Initiative, Building Changes also provided the county leads and providers with technical assistance (i.e., training, capacity building, ongoing support), documentation and synthesis of research, and support with designing and implementing pilot projects. Additionally, the counties were provided support by the Foundation and Building Changes through convenings by both organizations on key topics, such as rapid re-housing; visits to other communities across the country to see innovative practices in action; and a variety of tri-county meetings to facilitate cross-learning and focus on shared challenges, such as improving the quality and usability of their data systems.

Status of Family Homeless Service Delivery in the Three Initiative Counties *Prior* to Systems Reform

In 2010, prior to systems reform, the three counties were very similar in the status of their homeless service delivery “systems.” All three counties operated not as systems, but as uncoordinated continuums (see Exhibit 1), providing emergency shelter for families for maximum stays of 90 days, with families often moving from shelter to shelter to prolong their shelter stays until a slot opened up in transitional housing. Neither King County or Pierce County had any coordinated intake or entry process; families in these counties needed to contact shelters directly (often multiple shelters at a time), either going on wait-lists for those shelters that maintained them or calling back shelters frequently to find space when available. Snohomish County maintained a coordinated list of families needing shelter or transitional housing assistance, but the county staff often referred to it as the “waitlist to nowhere” as there were few mechanisms to move families off the list. In addition, families needed to call in every two weeks to keep their name on the list. Although there was one number that could be called, families also could circumvent the list and call individual providers to try to obtain assistance on their own.

⁴ Certain SIG funds administered in the final years of the Initiative, designated for improvements to the collection and use of data and to sustain earlier systems change, have been exempt from this match requirement.

⁵ Although it is tempting to divide the amount provided for homeless assistance and systems reform by the number of families served or the number of families who are homeless, this type of calculation would have little validity. Much of the funding is used for infrastructure development and operation, which are not temporary developments and would serve many families over a number of years. In addition, the funding supports some services that may reach broader populations, such as screening families who may not be homeless and providing triage assistance.

Exhibit 1. Status of “Systems” Prior to Systems Reform (2010): Uncoordinated Continuums

Access to Homeless Assistance	Access to Homelessness Prevention	Access to Housing	Access to Services	Access to Economic Opportunities
Access to assistance in King and Pierce Counties was through individual providers with no formal coordination mechanisms	Typically one time assistance or limited No coordination with homeless services	Focus on continuum—shelter to transitional housing and then to housing if available	Providers generally provided same services to all served Limited connection with mainstream services	No relationship between shelter and education/employment providers
Snohomish County had coordinated system of entry but functioned as a waitlist	Not geared to families with very precarious housing situations	Providers focus on preparing families to be “housing ready”; orientation was not Housing First		

Services to prevent the incidence of homelessness were not considered part of homeless service delivery in any of the three counties, and they were not coordinated with shelter or other housing assistance. Prevention services were typically administered through one or more housing assistance providers to families that sought the services; eligibility criteria (e.g., employment verification) varied by provider, and families typically had to prove that they could maintain their housing on their own in the months following receipt of the assistance. Prevention assistance was most often one-time financial assistance such as short-term rental subsidies, eviction prevention, transportation assistance, or utility assistance.

Families in shelter typically expected to move on to transitional housing, and providers often thought this movement was best for families to ensure that they were “housing ready” before moving to market-rate housing. Transitional housing also was generally thought of as a place families could stay while waiting for a Section 8 voucher (a subsidy for housing provided by a Public Housing Agency that typically limits rent to 30 percent of a family’s income). Although some families did leave shelter directly for market-rate housing that they found on their own, providers’ emphasis was not on finding permanent housing.

Services provided to families in shelter and transitional housing included case management and sometimes a range of other services (e.g., substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, and childcare). Services were not coordinated across shelter providers in any of the three counties. In addition, some individual providers provided their clients with services to assist with self-sufficiency,

such as money management and credit repair, and some offered employment services, including resume development, job search, and interview skills. However, there were no systematic efforts in the communities to link people experiencing homelessness with employment opportunities or to mainstream employment providers.

National Context for Systems Reform in 2010

The status of the three counties in 2010 mirrored much of what was happening across the country. As noted in the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, developed by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), many communities were operating their housing and services in linear models in which families progress through shelter to transitional housing and then to permanent housing or permanent supportive housing.

There was, however, growing national attention to the need for developing comprehensive systems of care that focused on ending homelessness (e.g., Culhane, Metraux, & Byrne, 2010). The pillars of practice, outlined in the Theory of Change, were being tested in a few pioneering communities, serving as models of innovation. In addition, several federal efforts at the time were learning from these efforts and promoting strategies to foster both a coordinated approach and a Housing First orientation. In 2008, rapid re-housing was being developed and tested in a few communities on a small scale through a pilot demonstration funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with 23 communities. In 2009, rapid re-housing expanded through a temporary three-year program, the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), funded for \$1.5 billion through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In addition, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, which reauthorized and amended the McKinney Vento Homelessness Assistance Act, placed much more emphasis on prevention and re-housing assistance. Renaming the Emergency Shelter Grant to the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), the HEARTH Act widened ESG to include not only traditional shelter and outreach activities but also more prevention and re-housing activities. The Act also placed a greater emphasis on performance with incentives to proven strategies that reduce homelessness, such as rapid re-housing.

Thus, prevention and rapid re-housing approaches were being tested through HPRP and incentivized through the HEARTH Act. Diversion was also being discussed nationally as a specific type of prevention activity, defined as a strategy to prevent homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them find alternate housing arrangements outside the homeless assistance system (NAEH, 2011). The key distinction between diversion and prevention is that prevention targets people at risk of homelessness, whereas diversion targets people who are already seeking homeless assistance (NAEH, 2011).

Coordinated entry processes (centralized or coordinated processes designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals) were being tested in several communities, especially through the implementation of HPRP (HUD, 2017), and basic parameters for coordinated entry were set in the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program interim rule in 2012. Aligned with the concept of coordinated entry was a growing recognition of the need for progressive engagement and right-sizing of

the system (e.g., Culhane, Metraux, & Byrne, 2010); that is, providing a minimal level of assistance to everyone in the system, but using an individualized approach to increasing the level of assistance to those who need it. Finally, although there was attention to the need to improve access to education and meaningful employment for families experiencing homelessness (e.g., USICH, 2010, 2012, 2015), models of best practice were not available nationally as they were for housing and other service areas.

Thus, these national trends in systems helped to support and inform the work of the counties and Building Changes. As the Initiative has gotten underway, Building Changes and the county leads have contributed to the knowledge on best practices by participating in state and national forums and by developing toolkits and other documents to share what is being learned with other communities (see <https://buildingchanges.org/> for examples of the work that has been developed since 2010).

Systems Reform in the Three Counties

Each county began implementing the Initiative on its own timeframe, and with varying approaches. Pierce County was the first of the counties to implement change, beginning with centralized intake and prevention in January of 2011. Unanticipated high demand for prevention services, however, led the county to discontinue that effort and, in late 2014, to include diversion within its intake system. King County began with implementing coordinated entry in 2012, followed by pilots in diversion and rapid re-housing. Snohomish County began a two-year “systems” pilot with 75 families in July 2011, testing coordinated entry and prevention involving navigators (staff who work with families experiencing homelessness to identify strategies to resolve their housing situation and connect to needed services and housing), rapid re-housing, legal and mental health services, and employment and education projects.

Since their beginnings, each of the counties has experienced change and evolution across the pillars. For coordinated entry, in particular, each county has revised and refined its operations over the course of the Initiative to deal with challenges. To provide a context of what was experienced by families in Cohort 2, a brief summary of the status of the systems beginning in 2015 follows.

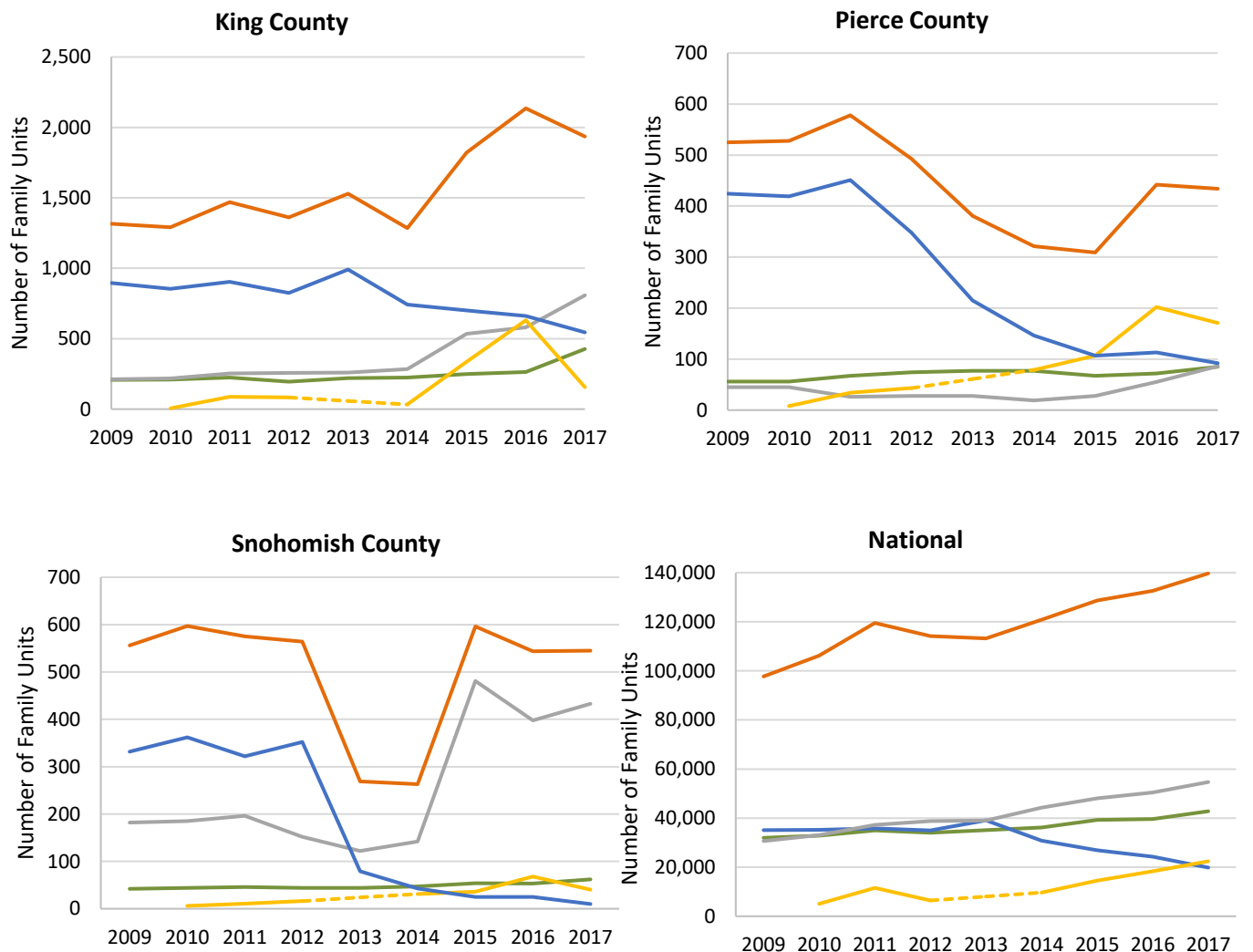
Coordinated Entry: All three counties had coordinated entry systems in place for families that included assessment of families’ needs, determination of eligibility, and assignment to different types of available assistance. Exhibits 2 through 4 provide detail on the elements of coordinated entry at that time in each of the counties. It is important to note, however, that the coordinated entry systems were continuously being refined during that time. In addition, although coordinated entry was intended to be the entry point for families into services, there continued to be families served by shelter and other housing providers that did not go through coordinated entry. Some shelter providers in the counties did not participate in the system. In addition, some providers had “side doors” into shelter and transitional housing. All three counties experienced challenges with providers in holding onto restrictive criteria that made it difficult to place families quickly, especially families with housing barriers such as specific types of past criminal justice involvement.

Access to Housing: All three counties had moved to a Housing First orientation, with more funding for rapid re-housing and increased efforts to realign and convert transitional housing. In addition to shelter and transitional housing, the system also provided options for direct placement into housing through diversion, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing. Data from Housing Inventory Counts (a point-in-time inventory of provider programs reported by each CoC to HUD that tallies the number of units available in January of each year) show these changes. Since 2009, all three counties experienced increases in rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing and a reduction in transitional housing (see Figure 3).⁶

Between 2009 and 2017, King County experienced an increase in overall housing capacity, largely due to increases in permanent supportive housing, shelter, and rapid re-housing. The county received a large influx of resources for rapid re-housing in 2015-2016 that continued through 2017, but more families in 2017 were in the housing search process and not represented in the counts (personal communication with All Home staff). Pierce County experienced a decrease in overall capacity (largely due to a steady decrease in transitional housing units between 2011 and 2015) and a similar fluctuation in rapid re-housing between 2016 and 2017, also representing families in the housing search process (personal communication with Department of Human Services staff). In Snohomish County, the precipitous drop in units in 2013 and 2014 are the results of the conversion of transitional housing units to permanent housing. Initially the transitional housing units were converted to “other permanent housing with services,” which is not recorded in the Housing Inventory Counts. In 2015, those units became permanent supportive housing (personal communication with Department of Human Services staff). The overall result has been capacity in 2015 comparable to what it was in 2009. King County’s housing changes are the closest of the three counties to what has been experienced nationally.

⁶ It is important to note that Housing Inventory Counts may not be an accurate measure of a CoC’s full housing assistance capacity over time. For shelter, transitional housing, and permanent/permanent supportive housing, the unit count includes both occupied and vacant units. For rapid re-housing, however, the unit count includes only those in which households are currently occupying housing and receiving financial assistance. Households receiving rapid re-housing assistance to find housing (but not yet in housing) are excluded from the count. Therefore, the rapid re-housing capacity of a CoC is likely underrepresented by the Housing Inventory Count.

Figure 3. Annual Housing Inventory Counts, January 2009- January 2017*



*ES=Emergency Shelter; TH=Transitional Housing; PSH=Permanent Supportive Housing; RRH=Rapid Re-housing; Overall=All housing types.

+ Rapid re-housing was not included in the Housing Inventory Counts for 2009, but was added in 2010. In addition, it was not accounted for in the 2013 Housing Inventory Count; dashed lines indicate imputed units of rapid re-housing for 2013, based on available data from 2012 and 2014.

Homelessness Prevention and Diversion: Homelessness prevention services were available in Snohomish County through its prevention navigators, who identify and provide resources to families at risk of homelessness. Prevention navigators conducted assessments with families and then helped them in resolving their barriers to accessing and keeping housing, including accessing employment services, addressing transportation issues, negotiating with landlords, and searching for apartments. Prevention navigators also had access to a flexible fund to assist families with car repairs, work-related expenses,

overdue utilities or rent, or other financial barriers to renting. King and Pierce Counties have not emphasized prevention services for families on a systems level (both counties have prevention services for low-income families, but the funding tends to be project based and limited). Instead, both King and Pierce Counties implemented diversion, increasingly weaving it into their systems as a tool to divert families from entering the homelessness system or exiting shelter quickly. In Pierce County, in particular, all families entering coordinated entry in both counties were offered diversion before other types of assistance. Families engage in diversion conversations with selected providers, using creative problem-solving to identify alternatives to families entering shelter or receiving a referral to a housing program. Flexible funds and other resources are available to resolve issues that could help eliminate the housing crisis, most typically used for move-in costs, rental application fees, or previous housing debts. Some creative uses also were reported, such as funds for an electrician work license to help a head of household regain employment and be able to pay rent, conflict mediation with a family to restore a shared housing arrangement, and funds for car repair to help a family continue employment with more reliable transportation. Although there are similarities and differences in the approaches across the two counties, a key distinction is that in Pierce County diversion assistance is provided once per family, whereas in King County, if the first diversion assistance is not successful a provider may try alternate approaches.

In Snohomish County, families who call 211 are referred to housing navigators to work with them while they wait for housing assistance, providing them with assistance to help resolve their housing or other service needs. The goal, however, is not necessarily to divert families from the system, but to provide the “right service” at the “right time”. Reportedly, a portion of families calling 211 are not connected to housing navigators due to high “no show” rates for those appointments. The drop-off rate may result from long wait times between calling 211 and appointments with navigators due to high caseloads.

Tailored Services: Efforts to tailor services ranged across the counties, with King and Pierce Counties focusing on ways to improve case management and implement progressive engagement, particularly paired with rapid re-housing, and Snohomish County investing in SIGs on mental health, dispute resolution, and legal services. Though these efforts were largely not systemic, Pierce County did at the time implement county-wide training on case management and progressive engagement.

Employment and Education: Employment and education projects were funded in all three counties. Employment navigation and sector training, although well-received and yielding promising results from pilot efforts supported by SIGs (Building Changes, 2017), were not funded independently by the counties. King County has been making moves recently to include employment at the front door of coordinated entry, but this had not occurred by the time period Cohort 2 families were being recruited. Therefore, not all families coming through coordinated entry in Cohort 2 would necessarily be offered educational and/or employment opportunities in a systematic way.

Exhibits 2 through 4 provide detail on the status of each county’s system during the Cohort 2 time period.

Exhibit 2. Status of Systems Reform, 2015-2016—King County

	Access to Homeless Assistance	Access to Homelessness Prevention	Access to Housing	Access to Services	Access to Economic Opportunities
Scope	CE fully implemented throughout county	Diversion fully implemented throughout county; individual prevention projects	RRH fully implemented throughout county, but with limited capacity	Limited implementation of tailored services	Employment navigation pilot project
Status	<p>CE (Family Housing Connection) operated by single provider</p> <p>Families call 211 to get a CE appointment for an assessment</p> <p>Eligibility limited to literally homeless (not doubled-up families)</p> <p>Once assessed, families are placed on the CE waitlist</p> <p>Strategies underway to limit provider criteria</p> <p>Preparing to move to regional access points and a uniform assessment tool</p>	<p>Diversion is operated through selected providers</p> <p>SIGs investing in prevention including Housing Stability Program and navigation for immigrant and refugee populations</p>	<p>Following a pilot in 2014, county expanded RRH stock and participating providers in order to serve a larger number of families</p> <p>Moved towards linking RRH with coordinated entry and employment services</p> <p>RRH providers participate in learning circles</p> <p>Conversion plan for TH in place but progress was slow</p>	<p>County continued to pursue strategies for tailoring services and progressive engagement</p> <p>SIG to provide case management services to families with children experiencing health problems</p>	<p>Pilot project provides employment navigation to families in RRH</p>

*CE=Coordinated Entry; RRH=Rapid Re-housing; TH=Transitional Housing.

Exhibit 3. Status of Systems Reform, 2015-2016—Pierce County

	Access to Homeless Assistance	Access to Homelessness Prevention	Access to Housing	Access to Services	Access to Economic Opportunities
Scope	Centralized intake/CE fully implemented throughout county	Diversion fully implemented in 2016; limited prevention	RRH fully implemented throughout county, but with limited capacity	Training on case management fully implemented	Individual projects to increase employment
Status	<p>Centralized intake in place for all populations</p> <p>Eligibility limited to literally homeless</p> <p>Families assessed and placed on placement roster</p> <p>Beginning in January 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved from centralized intake to CE with multiple providers Providers required to relax their eligibility criteria Replaced placement roster with 90-day priority pool 	<p>Limited prevention services available; City of Tacoma funded prevention, county did not</p> <p>County exploring diversion strategies through pilot projects, including one partnering with school systems</p> <p>Developing a prevention and diversion screener to better target assistance</p> <p>Beginning in March 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversion offered to everyone in CE 	<p>RRH offered through multiple agencies and funding streams (including Tacoma Housing Authority); variation across agencies</p> <p>SIG to pair RRH with shelter to reduce shelter stays</p> <p>County working with providers in a RRH collaborative</p> <p>Landlord liaison project assisted with recruiting landlords</p> <p>Began converting transitional housing to PSH</p>	<p>Focus on case management training through Provider Academy</p> <p>Embraced progressive engagement approach</p> <p>Other services incorporated into diversion and RRH case management</p>	<p>Diversion and RRH case managers refer families to employment providers</p> <p>Multiple SIGs to expand employment services available in county</p>

*CE=Coordinated Entry; RRH=Rapid Re-housing; TH=Transitional Housing; PSH=Permanent Supportive Housing.

Exhibit 4. Status of Systems Reform, 2015-2016—Snohomish County

	Access to Homeless Assistance	Access to Homelessness Prevention	Access to Housing	Access to Services	Access to Economic Opportunities
Scope	CE fully implemented in 2016	Prevention navigation fully implemented throughout county	RRH fully implemented throughout county, but with limited capacity	Individual projects in selected service areas	Individual projects to increase employment
Status	<p>No wrong door approach involves housing navigators throughout the county; Families call 211, are triaged and assigned to a navigator</p> <p>Navigators assess families' services, develop an action plan, and work to connect families to housing and services with access to flex funds</p> <p>Shelters operate outside of CE; maintain their own waitlists</p> <p>Process of getting providers on board to accept referrals was slow</p> <p>In 2016, management of CE moved from a provider to the county; assessment and referral process became more systematic</p>	<p>Prevention is a priority in Snohomish</p> <p>Families at risk of homelessness referred to prevention navigators; could use flex funds to address issues that may lead to homelessness</p> <p>Dispute resolution services and legal services available to all families</p>	<p>Two agencies providing RRH services for families referred through CE; county created a uniform RRH program across various funding streams</p> <p>SIG to support a landlord liaison project to help recruit landlords; did not include a risk mitigation fund</p> <p>County re-purposed TH as PSH</p>	<p>Investing in mental health, dispute resolution and legal services through SIGs</p> <p>Developing a navigator training certificate with Edmonds Community College</p>	<p>Numerous SIGs to connect families to employment services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment navigators for all families • Assertive Engagement Specialists to serve families on Section 8 waitlists • Supportive employment program for families with mental health concerns and on TANF

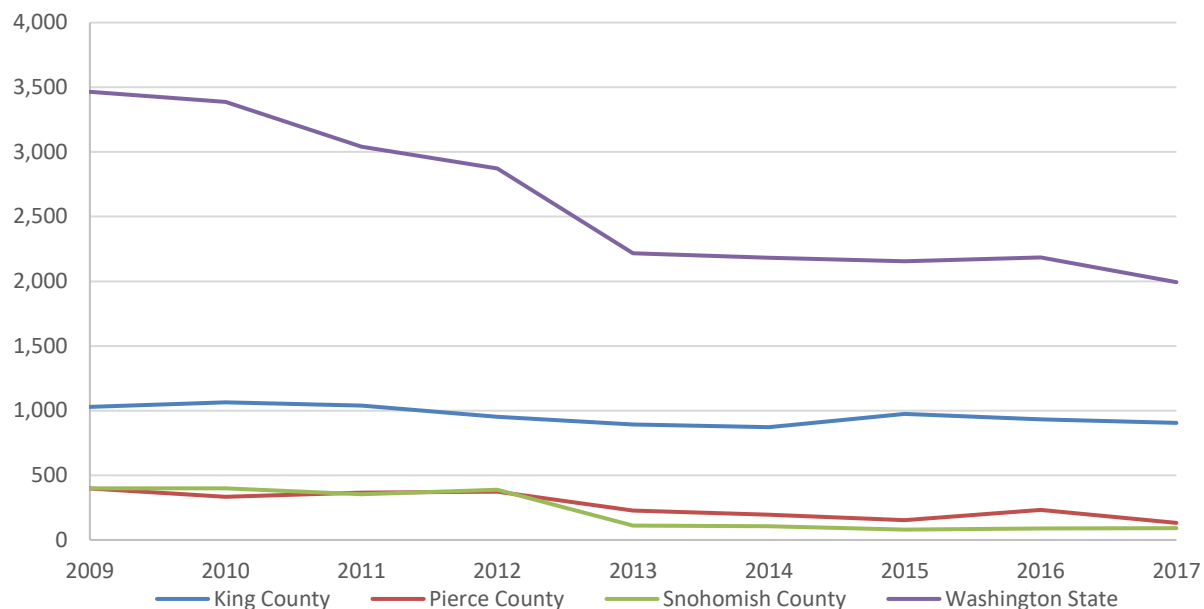
*CE=Coordinated Entry; RRH=Rapid Re-housing; TH=Transitional Housing; PSH=Permanent Supportive Housing; TANF=Temporary Aid to Need Families.

Since 2016, change in the three counties has continued, particularly in the shape and nature of the coordinated entry systems. Whereas the systems previously operated on a first come, first served basis, all three counties began implementing prioritization through coordinated entry based on families' level of vulnerability. Change has also occurred in the other pillars since 2016, but not to the degree experienced with coordinated entry. King and Pierce Counties now both have coordinated entry systems that have multiple access points, multiple assessors using vulnerability assessments, and prioritization strategies for providing assistance. Diversion also is offered to all families in each system. In Snohomish County, all providers are now participating in coordinated entry as part of a "no-wrong door" approach (i.e., families in need of housing and services can access any provider in the community and receive access to the help they need). Finally, in all three counties, families are entering shelter directly, outside the coordinated entry system, to provide for more rapid accommodation of the growing number of literally homeless families. The changes in coordinated entry are in line with federal requirements and encouragements, outlined by HUD in January 2017 and required for January 2018.

Preliminary Examination of Effects of Systems Reform on Capacity and Efficiency

To understand how the changes have affected the capacity of the system and its efficiency, we need to examine several variables. First, we need to have an understanding of the size of the pipeline of families experiencing homelessness. The Point in Time counts (an annual count of homeless persons on a single night in January) show a decline in the number of families experiencing homelessness in all three counties (and the state as a whole and mirroring national trends); King County has had the least change (Figure 4). However, as this number for families is largely influenced by shelter capacity, it is often not an accurate indicator of the size of the population experiencing homelessness, especially for families. Data from the coordinated entry systems, not yet available for this report, should provide a more accurate understanding of the number of families experiencing homelessness and seeking services over time.

Figure 4. Point-In-Time Counts



Source: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/> available. As discussed earlier and presented in Figure 3, capacity (as measured by the Housing Inventory Counts reported to HUD) has varied across the three counties. Since 2009, capacity has increased in King County, decreased in Pierce County, and returned in January 2017 to the January 2009 level in Snohomish County. It is important to note that these numbers do not include families who achieved housing through diversion or housing navigation.

Third, we need to understand the numbers of families served over time. Based on data from the counties' Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS),⁷ Figure 5 provides the total unduplicated number of households with children served in each year from 2012 through 2016 in each county, distinguishing continuing enrollments from the prior year from new enrollments for that current year in each stacked bar. For example, in King County in 2016, 2,864 families were served, 60 percent of whom were new enrollments. All three counties show an increase in the number served over time, with the increases largely due to new enrollments.

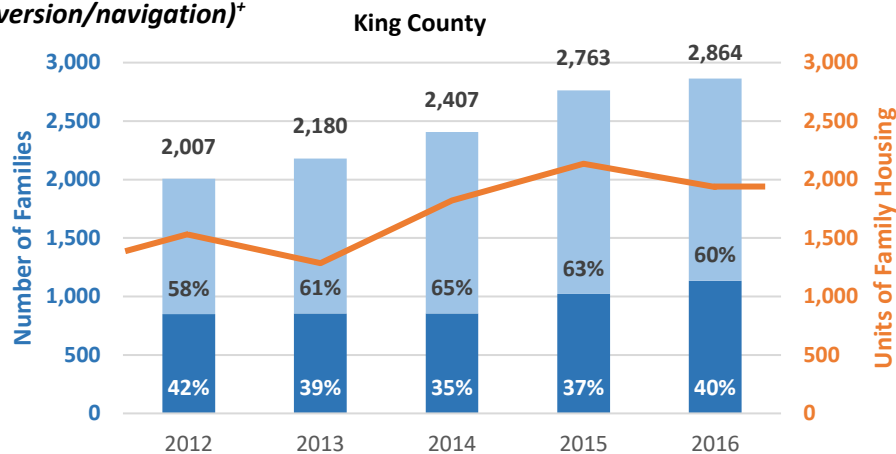
To gain a preliminary understanding of the system's efficiency, we compared the Housing Inventory Counts with the number of families served with the understanding that the Housing Inventory Count is an incomplete and likely somewhat inaccurate measure of the housing capacity of the system. We used the Housing Inventory Count for the subsequent year to compare with the number served in the prior year as it was functionally a housing count for the end of that year (for example, the 2017 Housing Inventory Count was compared to the number of families served in 2016). The line superimposed on each set of bar charts in Figure 5 represents the Housing Inventory Counts. These charts suggest different systems dynamics in each county. In King County, both capacity and numbers served have

⁷ These analyses were provided by Building Changes' Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation team.

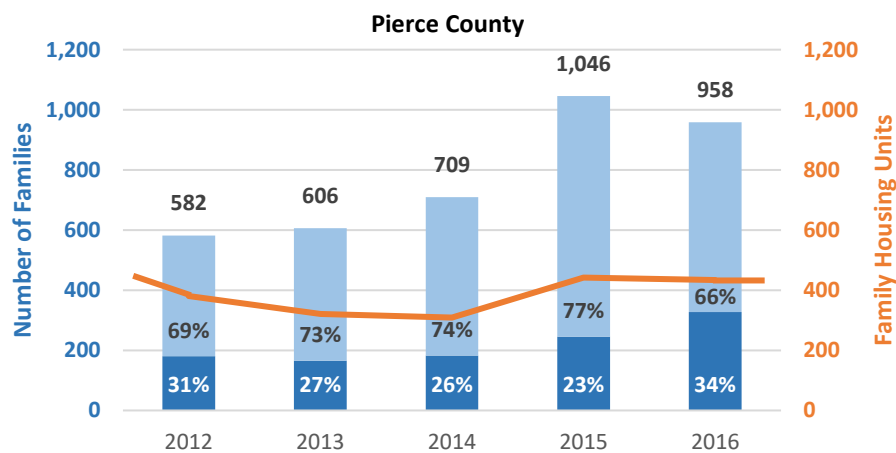
grown since 2012, resulting in approximately 1.48 families served per unit of housing in 2016. In Pierce County, the number served has increased over time despite a decrease in inventory, resulting in more than 2 families served per unit since 2014. Finally, in Snohomish County, the number of units in the housing inventory and the number of families served have remained somewhat steady since 2014, with approximately 1 family served per unit.

These charts provide a preliminary understanding of the systems dynamics, but tell only a part of the story. They do not include diversion or navigation and may also be missing other housing that is not reported. The quality of the HMIS systems also has varied over time, and they may have limitations that are not fully understood. A more detailed analysis of the systems developed in the three demonstration systems will be completed by 2019, enhanced by an analysis of the two contrast counties as well as additional data from the HMIS and the coordinated entry systems. In addition, as we examine longer-term outcomes for families in the systems from our cohort study, we will discuss how the findings align with these changed systems.

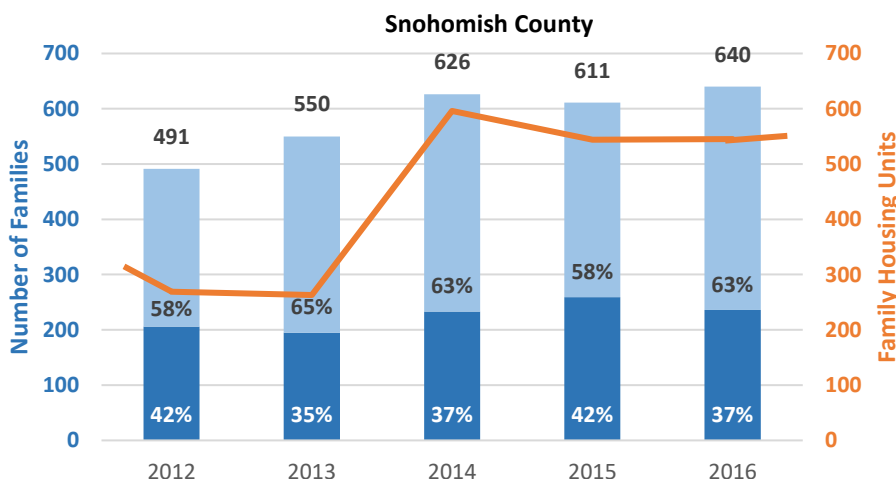
Figure 5. Number of Families Served, 2012-2016 Compare to Housing Available (not including diversion/navigation)*



Ratio—King County	
Year	Families served/unit of housing
2012	1.31
2013	1.70
2014	1.32
2015	1.29
2016	1.48



Ratio—Pierce County	
Year	Families served/unit of housing
2012	1.53
2013	1.89
2014	2.29
2015	2.37
2016	2.21



Ratio—Snohomish County	
Year	Families served/unit of housing
2012	1.83
2013	2.09
2014	1.05
2015	1.12
2016	1.17

■ New enrollments
■ Continuing enrollments
— Housing inventory

* Housing inventory was gauged using data from the Housing Inventory Count performed in the January of the following year (to assess housing availability in the prior calendar year). Housing inventory in 2012 includes imputed units of rapid re-housing, as data on number of units was not collected during the yearly count.

Context Changes Over Time

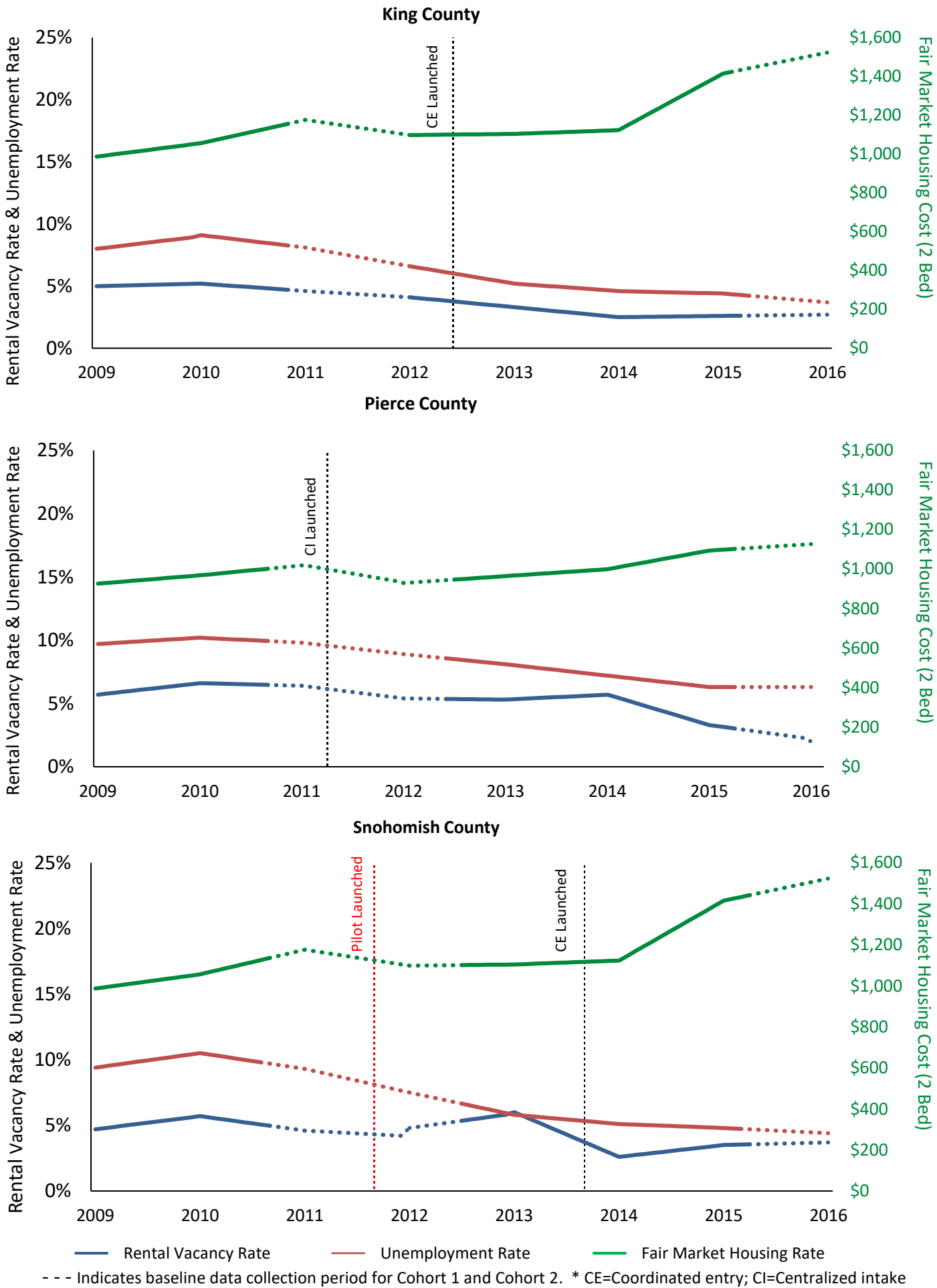
The work of the counties is affected and informed by the national context, including practice and policy developments specific to homelessness, but also funding changes that can affect the availability of housing and services (such as the effects of Sequestration in 2013 on Section 8 availability). Systems reform also is affected by the context within Washington State and in each particular county. For Washington State, changes in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) enforcement in 2011, fluctuations in funding sources such as the state document recording fees and the Housing Trust Fund, and policy changes related to Medicaid, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the minimum wage all have had some effects on how the county lead organizations and providers within their counties approach their work, especially when fluctuations in these sources impact the funding available at the local level.

In addition, each of the counties' family homeless housing and service systems operate within a complex local context. Local context changes can have among the most direct impact on the work. Examples of contextual changes and events that have impacted the work of the counties include changes in political leaders at all levels of government in all three counties, pressures for additional shelter in King and Pierce Counties in the face of encampments, and the need for the Snohomish County homeless lead organization to respond to the Oso Mudslide in 2014. In our forthcoming systems analysis, we will examine the role of these various contextual changes and events in delaying, expediting, or reshaping the system reform efforts of the counties.

For this report, the context changes that likely have most effect on the experiences and outcomes of families relate to changes in the economic context. As Figure 6 shows, the economic climate changed dramatically in the three counties over the course of the Initiative and during the data collection periods for the two cohorts of families. The unemployment rate has steadily declined in all three counties since 2009 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). At the beginning of Cohort 1 (October 2010), the rate across the counties was between 9 and 10 percent, and, in May 2015 at the start of Cohort 2, the unemployment rate was approximately 5 percent in each of the counties. The rental vacancy rate, a measure of the tightness of the housing market and the strength of the economy, fluctuated more over time in each of the three counties than the other indicators reviewed, but also generally was lower during the Cohort 2 data collection than in Cohort 1. Finally, the fair market rent set by HUD, also an indicator of the cost of the housing market and overall economic wealth of an area, stayed relatively steady in each of the three counties between 2011 and 2014 at about \$1,000-\$1,200, but spiked to nearly \$1,600 in 2016 in King and Snohomish Counties (HUD, 2017, October 2). Median household income, also an important indicator of the economic climate, steadily increased between 2009 and 2016 in all three counties and at rates in King and Snohomish Counties that were higher than the national average (see Appendix D). Moreover, the overall region, particularly Seattle, experienced the fastest growth of anywhere in the country. According to the Census, between July 1, 2015 and July 1, 2016, the city grew by 3.1 percent, with nearly 21,000 additional residents.

These contextual changes need to be considered as we examine systems changes and their effects on families. In our interviews with stakeholders, especially in recent years, they have frequently spoken about the challenges of the tight housing market. For example, county lead staff in King County reported that the average number of days it took families with the rapid re-housing resource to find housing increased from 38 days in May 2014 to 76 days by January 2015. The dramatic market changes, therefore, can confound the effect of systems reform on family outcomes. In Sections III and IV, we discuss efforts to account for the context changes in our outcome models.

Figure 6. Contextual Factors, by County



Section II: Characteristics of Families Served Before and After Systems Reform

Heads of household (HoHs) of families that receive homeless assistance in Cohort 2 after reform are similar on most demographic and background characteristics to Cohort 1 HoHs of families served prior to systems reform. The families in the two cohorts do differ in their recent homeless experiences as well as in their rates of employment and amount of monthly income. Cohort 2 HoHs, compared to Cohort 1 HoHs, are more likely to have experienced recent homelessness in the six months prior to receiving homeless assistance, consistent with a tightening of eligibility for assistance in all three counties to literal homelessness. They are also more likely than Cohort 1 HoHs to be employed at baseline and have higher incomes, with significantly more income coming from SSI/SSDI, and to have medical insurance – all changes that are likely affected, in part, by changes in the overall context.

However, somewhat unexpectedly, Cohort 2 HoHs are more likely to be older and have more education, larger families, and children who are older than Cohort 1 HoHs.

There are not significant differences between target children in the two cohorts in demographics, schooling, and health.

The Characteristics of Families Served in the System

For each cohort of families, we collected detailed information on families' background and demographics, strengths and vulnerabilities, and homelessness and housing history.⁸ In this section, we present characteristics for families in Cohort 2 across the three counties and highlight any differences compared to the characteristics of Cohort 1 families. Differences between the two cohorts in the characteristics of the families served are important for understanding how changes in eligibility as well as context may have influenced changes in the types of families receiving assistance. Moreover, these individual differences are important to include and control in our analyses of family outcomes, in order to isolate the effects that are due to the system changes between the two cohorts. Appendix E presents information for each county individually.

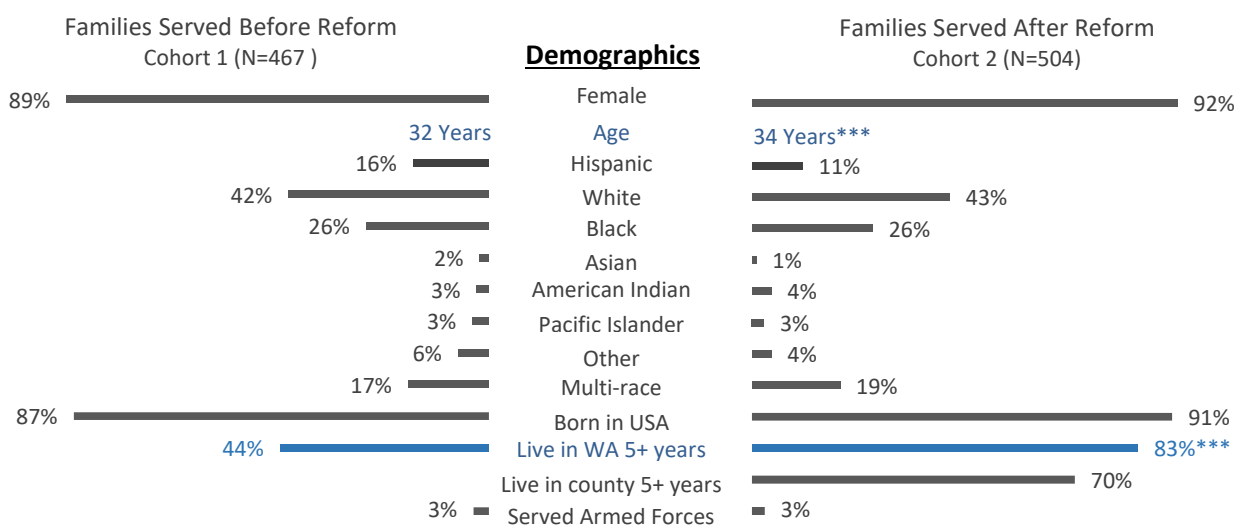
Background, Demographics, and Family Composition: Families served in Cohort 2 are largely led by single parents who are female, and, on average, in their mid-30s and who reflect a range of races. As Table 4 below shows, fewer than half (43%) of Cohort 2 families are white, 26 percent are African American, 19 percent are multi-race, 4 percent are American Indian, 3 percent are Pacific Islanders, 1 percent are Asian, and 4 percent are a variety of other races. These data are consistent with prior studies that document that families that become homeless are disproportionately African American or

⁸ Some variables, such as income, are measured at the interview wave. Others, such as housing situation and employment, are measured 6 months or 12 months before and after the date of receipt of initial assistance.

other non-white families (e.g., Rog & Buckner, 2008). Appendix F displays the disproportionality of race among poor and homeless populations in the three counties. The Cohort 2 sample shows higher percentages of African American families and most other non-white races (with the exception of Asian) than among the population as a whole and even among the population living below the poverty line. The Cohort 2 race distribution, however, is comparable to that of all families served in each county's homeless system in 2016, as measured through the HMIS.⁹ The only notable difference between the HMIS and Cohort 2 is that Cohort 2 HoHs are more likely to be multi-racial than HoHs of families in the HMIS, likely due to the differences in how race data were collected in our study and the HMIS.

As Table 3 notes, the vast majority of HoHs in Cohort 2 were born in the United States and 83 percent have lived in the state of Washington for five years or more, with a little more than a third native to the state. Seventy percent have lived in the county for five years or more (available only for Cohort 2). Approximately 3 percent of HoHs have served in the Armed Forces. Families have an average of 1.8 children under 19 years of age, more than a third have a child under 2 years of age and 8 percent are pregnant (see Table 4). Twenty-seven percent have a spouse or partner, and a quarter of the families have a child living away from the family.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the HoHs of Families in Each Cohort



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001¹⁰ Blue lines indicate significant differences.

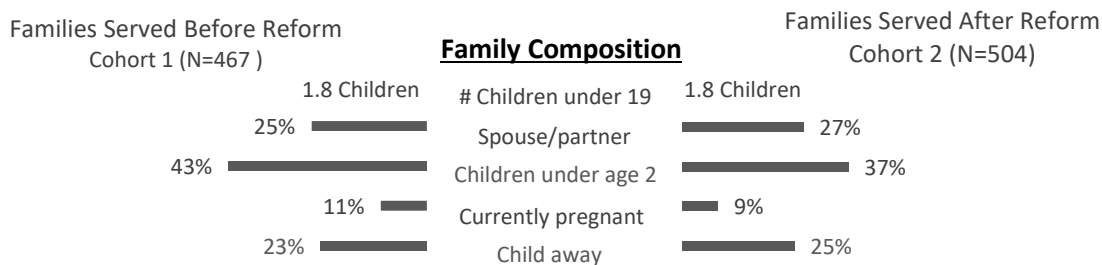
Compared to Cohort 1 HoHs, Cohort 2 HoHs are similar on most demographic and background characteristics but are significantly more likely to be older, more likely to have lived in the state of Washington for five or more years, and less likely to have children under 2 years old. The difference in

⁹ The HMIS is a data management system used by CoCs across the country to collect client-level data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. The HMIS is used by CoCs to report data to HUD.

¹⁰ When conducting multiple statistical analyses, the probability of observing a false positive increases. In order to reduce the number of false positives we report, we used a false discovery rate (FDR), a statistical correction used to set a higher threshold for statistical significance.

average age between the two cohorts is consistent with trends for the population of single adults experiencing homeless (Culhane et al., 2013). However, it is not clear if other factors (e.g., differences in eligibility criteria for homeless services) could account for the age difference and other demographic shifts.

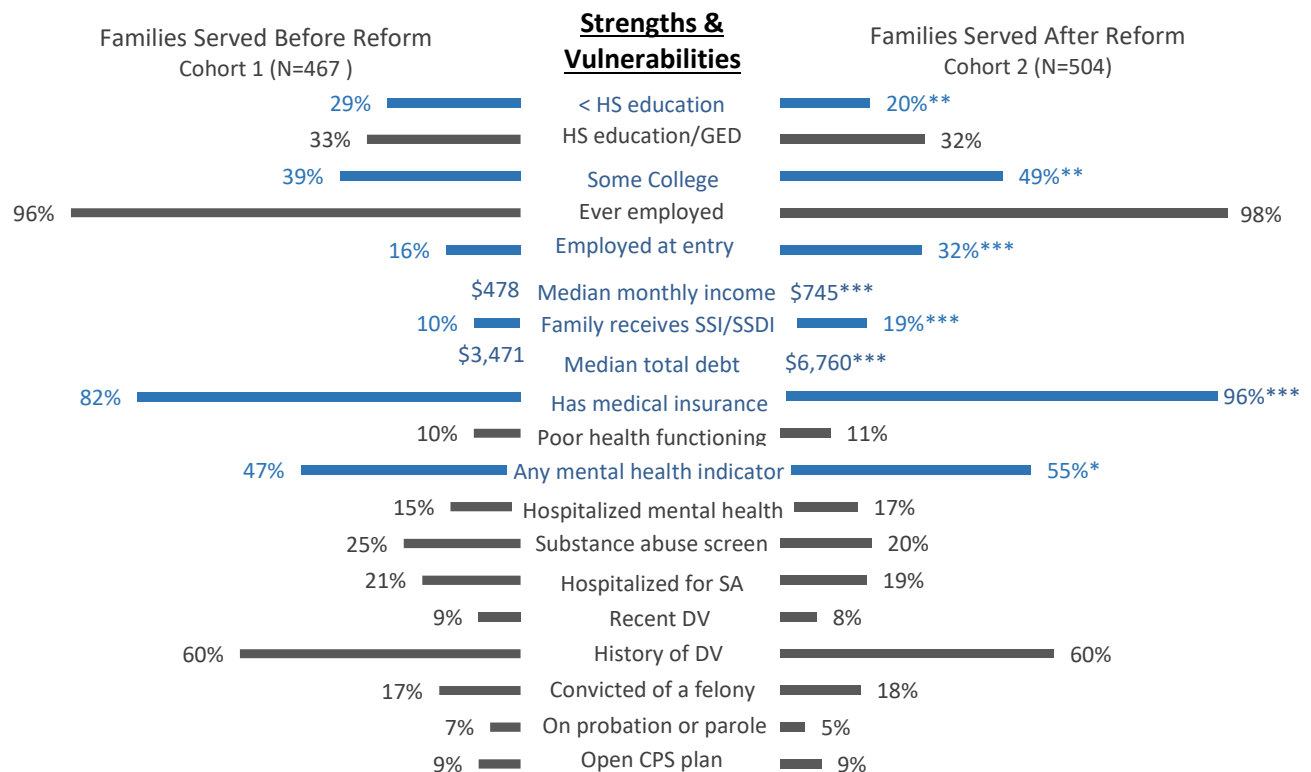
Table 4. Composition of Families in Each Cohort



Strengths and Vulnerabilities: Nearly half of Cohort 2 HoHs have pursued education beyond the high school degree, nearly all have been employed at some point, and 31 percent enter homeless services with a job. They have a median monthly income of \$745 upon receipt of first assistance (Table 5). Nearly all HoHs (96%) have medical insurance for themselves and 100 percent have it for their children. Nineteen percent receive SSI/SSDI either for themselves and/or a family member. Compared to Cohort 1 HoHs, at the time they begin to receive homeless assistance Cohort 2 HoHs are significantly more likely to have higher education and be employed as well as to have a higher median income, SSI/SSDI, and medical insurance.

With respect to vulnerabilities, families in Cohort 2 have a median debt of \$6,760 with 24 percent having \$20,000 or more. Eleven percent of the Cohort 2 HoHs score as poor health functioning on a standardized health measure, more than half screen for one or more indicators of mental health concerns (i.e., anxiety, depression, or low mental health functioning), 60 percent report past domestic violence, and 8 percent report current violence. Seventeen percent of the Cohort 2 HoHs report a past hospitalization for mental health concerns, a fifth of screen for substance abuse concerns, and 19 percent report a past substance abuse hospitalization or stay in inpatient treatment. Eighteen percent report having been convicted of a felony, but only 5 percent are currently on probation or parole. Nine percent of HoHs have an open Child Protective Services (CPS) plan, and 2 percent have a child in foster care. HoHs of families in the two cohorts are comparable on most of these characteristics.

Table 5. Strengths and Vulnerabilities of HoHs of Families in Each Cohort



SA= Substance abuse DV=Domestic violence

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 Blue lines indicate significant differences.

A closer look at the nature of the employment, wages, and hours among HoHs employed in both cohorts at the time they began to receive homeless assistance indicates that the amount of hourly wages and the number of hours was significantly greater for HoHs who worked in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1, contributing to their higher incomes (see Table 6). Additionally, HoHs in Cohort 2 are more likely to work in jobs that offer benefits.¹¹ There are not significant differences in the percentage of HoHs working multiple jobs, or working in jobs that are permanent or offer opportunities for advancement.

¹¹ We are exploring the relationship between hours worked and access to benefits to discern if the increase in benefits is due to a greater number of HoHs working full time jobs or better jobs.

Table 6. Employment Characteristics for HoHs' Jobs at Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance

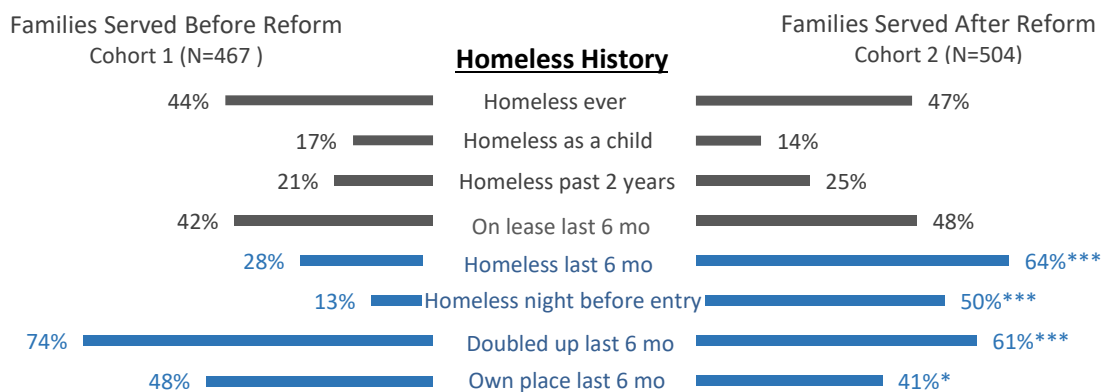
	Cohort 1 (N=73)	Cohort 2 (N=158)
Hours per week (N=71,132)	26	31**
Hourly wage (N=71,127)	\$10.51	\$13.03**
Working multiple jobs (N=60,116)	8%	9%
Job offers benefits (N=71,129)	14%	47%***
Job type (N=72, 132)		
Permanent	65%	74%
Temporary	24%	17%
Seasonal/Day labor	11%	8%
Job offers opportunity for advancement (N=57, 130)	56%	68%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Looking at past homeless and housing history, slightly fewer than half of the HoHs of families in Cohort 2 (47%) report a past homeless experience prior to the current episode, a quarter in the past two years (Table 7). Approximately 14 percent experienced homelessness as a child. Cohort 1 HoHs are comparable to Cohort 2 HoHs on all these measures of homeless and housing history.

Reports of more recent homelessness indicate that considerably more families in Cohort 2 experienced homelessness in the six months prior to receiving their initial assistance than in the past two years and significantly more than Cohort 1 families. Over two-thirds of Cohort 2 families experienced at least one night homeless during the six months prior to receiving their initial homeless assistance, compared to fewer than one-third of the families in Cohort 1. Over half reported being homeless the night before receiving assistance, four times the rate reported by Cohort 1 HoHs. Fewer Cohort 2 HoHs than Cohort 1 HoHs report being doubled up (61% vs. 75%) and in their own place (41% vs. 48%) during the six month period prior to receiving homelessness assistance. Comparable percentages of HoHs in the two cohorts, however, have been on a lease sometime in this same six-month period.

Table 7. Homeless History of Families in Each Cohort



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 Blue lines indicate significant differences.

Target Child Characteristics, Schooling, and Health:

As previously indicated, we collected more detailed information about one child in the family (target child), selected at random from among children between 2 and 18 years of age who were living with the respondent at the time of selection, with preference to a school-aged child if one was present in the household. Table 8 provides the percentages of families with selected school-aged children and those with selected children under 6 years of age.

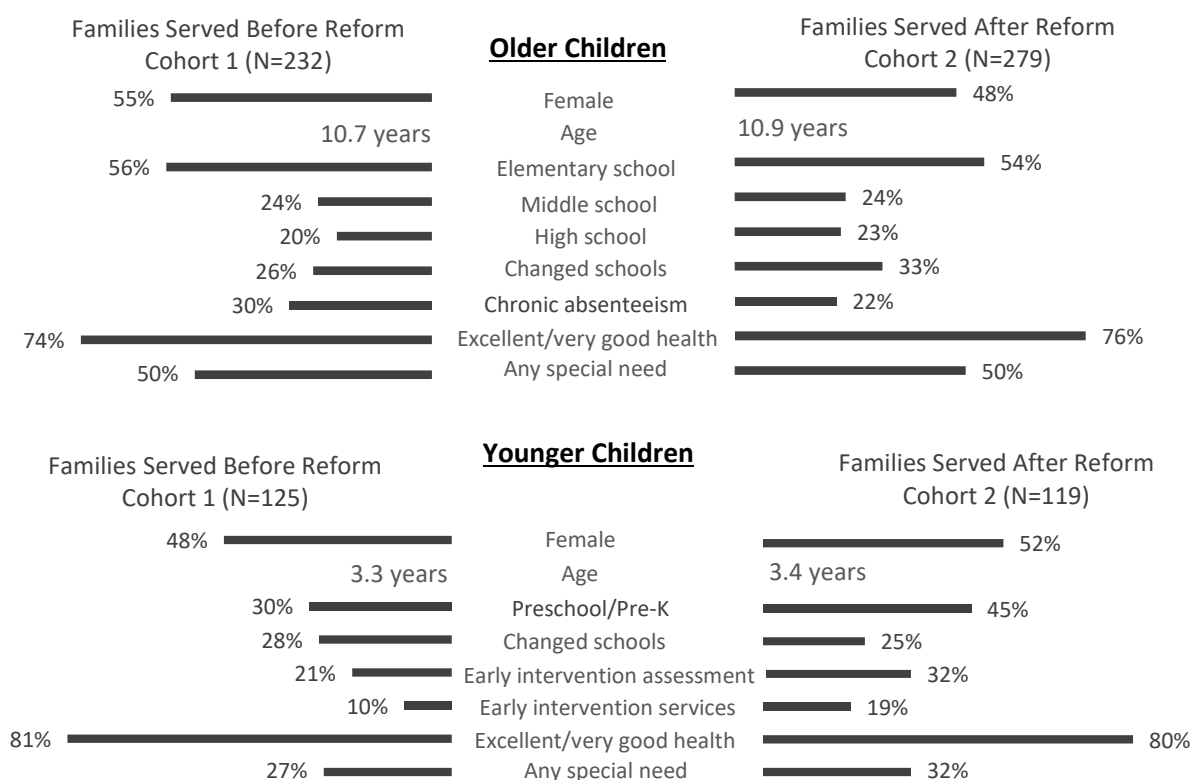
Table 8. Percentages of Families with a School Aged or Younger Target Child in Each Cohort

	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Total (N=971)
Percentage of families with:			
<i>School aged target child</i>	50%	55%	53%
<i>Younger target child</i>	27%	24%	25%
<i>No target child</i>	24%	21%	22%

Table 9 presents information on demographics, schooling, and health for the school-aged children and the younger children. Among school-aged target children in Cohort 2, half were female, with an average age of 10.9 years. About half were in elementary school, with the remaining half in middle school and high school. One-third of the school-aged children changed schools when their families began receiving homeless assistance, and 22 percent had missed six or more days of school in the three months (measuring chronic absenteeism) before the baseline interview. The majority of children were reported by the HoH to be in very good or excellent health; however, 50 percent reportedly had at least one special need, including either a learning disability; a speech, hearing, or vision concern; a physical illness, disability, or concern; a developmental concern; and/or a mental health condition. Cohort 2 school-aged children are comparable to Cohort 1 school-aged children on all these measures except chronic absenteeism; fewer Cohort 2 children (22%) were reportedly chronically absent than Cohort 1 (30%) upon receipt of initial assistance. These numbers, though high, are surprisingly in line with the percentages of school-aged children chronically absent in the Puget Sound area. Although national estimates of chronic absenteeism (for the 2013-14 school year) are lower (13%) than both cohort estimates, the percentages of chronic absenteeism for school districts in the three counties range from 16.7 percent (Mukileto School District) to more than 30 percent (Auburn School District) (Jacob & Lovett, 2017; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2017).

Among the younger target children in Cohort 2, their average age was 3.4 years old and 52 percent were female. Almost half of the children (45%) were enrolled in pre-school; one-fifth changed schools when their families began to receive homeless services. About a third of children had received an assessment for early intervention services, and 19 percent were receiving those services. Most (80%) were reportedly in very good or excellent health, and 32 percent reportedly had at least one special need. There are not significant differences in the children in Cohort 1 and those in Cohort 2.

Table 9. Characteristics of Target Children in Each Cohort at Baseline



Importance of Difference Between the Cohort Samples

As noted earlier, the differences in characteristics and recent homeless and housing experiences between the families in the two cohorts are likely due, in part, to the introduction of coordinated entry as well as changes in the overall context. The use of new eligibility criteria and screening processes as part of the coordinated entry in each county was intended to limit assistance to families that were literally homeless upon seeking assistance.¹² Prior to the reform, families received homeless assistance almost exclusively through shelter and were not systematically screened for literal homelessness (e.g., living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or exiting an institution where they temporarily resided). Therefore, families in Cohort 1 living in doubled up situations were eligible for homeless assistance.

It is interesting to note that although a majority of Cohort 2 HoHs experienced homelessness in the six months leading up to assistance, not *all* families reported experiencing homelessness in this time frame. Some families may have entered the system through “side doors,” bypassing coordinated entry; others may have told assessors that they were homeless but were more accurate in detailing their history in our interviews. In addition, some families may have been unsheltered at the time of their coordinated

¹² All three counties now use vulnerability assessments and prioritization processes to provide homeless assistance to families, but those processes were not yet in effect in these counties during our recruitment of Cohort 2.

entry assessment but found other housing arrangements between their assessment and receiving assistance.

Other differences between the two cohorts may be due to context differences, as well as other factors that are difficult to discern. Differences in employment and income could be related, at least in part, to changes in the economic climate in all three counties. As discussed earlier, unemployment dropped considerably over these eight years and housing costs climbed. In addition, the enforcement of TANF timelines limiting households to 60 months of lifetime assistance occurred in 2011; thus, this provision was implemented midway in our Cohort 1 recruitment but was totally in enforcement for Cohort 2. It is possible that these changes in TANF policy spurred more HoHs in Cohort 2 to be employed and to work more hours than might have occurred under different contexts (see Table 6).

Section III: Effects of Systems Reform on Families' Experiences in the System

Families seeking homeless assistance after systems report in Cohort 2 reportedly experienced many of the same challenges in getting assistance as families seeking assistance before reform in Cohort 1. Although there is a slight drop in the median number of calls a HoH has to make and the median number of organizations a family has to contact before getting assistance, they wait a significantly longer time to receive assistance after contacting the homeless system. This wait time, however, is due largely to differences in the characteristics of families served between the two cohorts.

Families who receive homeless assistance in the three counties after systems reform no longer receive only shelter as a "one size fits all." Families in Cohort 2 received one of several options as their initial assistance, including diversion/navigation, rapid re-housing, shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. HoHs in both cohorts largely reported that the type of assistance they received met their family's needs, though HoHs in Cohort 1 reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with the assistance they received than did HoHs in Cohort 2.

Effects on the Help-Seeking Experience

Despite having coordinated entry in place in all three counties, HoHs in Cohort 2 continue to report making many calls to find a place to stay, participating in many assessments, and going to multiple places seeking assistance. As Table 10 indicates, there is a significant drop between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 in the median number of calls a HoH makes to get assistance (from 40 to 30) as well as a small but significant drop in the median number of organizations a HoH contacts seeking assistance (from 6 to 5). In both cohorts, however, there is a considerable range in the experience of families as measured by these numbers.

Cohort 2 HoHs report completing more assessments than Cohort 1 HoHs (3 vs. 2, respectively). Assessments were defined as a set of questions about housing and services that a family may need. Prior to systems reform, Cohort 1 HoHs may have completed assessments specifically for different individual housing providers and potentially other providers. Following systems reform, Cohort 2 families likely completed an assessment as part of coordinated entry, but may also complete some type of assessment for one or more providers.

Families in both cohorts were asked to indicate the date they *first requested* assistance from the homeless service system [including 211,¹³ a shelter or housing provider, or coordinated entry (for Cohort

¹³ In King and Snohomish Counties, 211 has served as a point of entry for homeless services for the whole study period. In Pierce County, 211 became a point of entry for homeless services in 2016.

2 only)]¹⁴ and the date they *first received assistance* (such as shelter or transitional housing in Cohort 1 and shelter, transitional housing, diversion assistance, permanent supportive housing, or rapid re-housing in Cohort 2)¹⁵. Statistical analyses comparing the difference between these two dates for both cohorts indicate that Cohort 2 HoHs report having to wait a significantly longer time to receive homeless assistance than Cohort 1 HoHs report. Families in Cohort 2 report waiting a median of 13 weeks between their first request and receiving assistance, approximately 3 weeks longer than families in Cohort 1.¹⁶ There are significant differences among the counties, however, and the difference between the two cohorts in wait time is largely due to the cohort difference in King County. King County Cohort 2 families wait a median of 20 weeks to receive assistance, more than double the median of 9 weeks of their Cohort 1 families. In Pierce and Snohomish Counties, the median wait times stay relatively stable (Pierce County is 8 and 9 weeks, respectively, in Cohorts 1 and 2; Snohomish County is 15 and 14 weeks, respectively, for Cohorts 1 and 2). Among families in Cohort 2, there are not significant differences in the length of time families report waiting for different types of assistance.

Table 10. Formal Help Seeking

	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)
% Contacted homeless system first	72%	76%
% Ever on waitlist	62%	75%**
% Ever contacted 211	78%	85%*
# Calls seeking assistance		
Mean	98	73**
Median	40	30*
Range	0-500+	0-500+
# Organizations contacted		
Mean	11	9
Median	6	5**
Range	0-99	0-100
# Different assessments		
Mean	5	5
Median	2	3**
Range	0-99	0-99
Time to entry (weeks) among those who contacted the homeless system*	(n=330)	(n=342)
Mean	25	38**
Median	10	14*
Range	0-500+	0-493

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

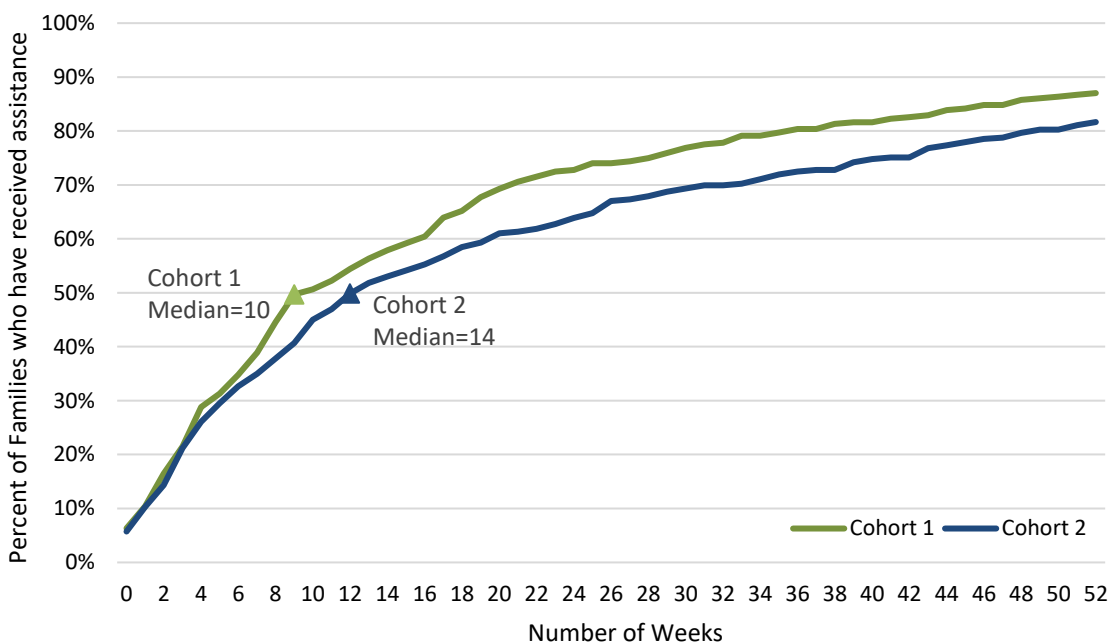
¹⁴ Families whose first request for assistance was made of a provider that is outside of the homeless service system, such as DSHS or a church, are excluded from this analysis.

¹⁵ These data are self-reported by families, not independently verified (with the exception of date of receipt of initial homeless assistance, which was supplied by providers). They are subject to errors in recall and may differ from that which is recorded in the counties' coordinated entry systems.

¹⁶ Median values are cited because means are skewed by several very long waits

To understand the variation in wait time for families, Figure 7 displays the time to receive assistance for families that contact the homeless system as their first formal contact. The figure shows that 18 percent of families in Cohort 2 reportedly waited a year or more to receive assistance, compared to 13 percent in Cohort 1. Additionally, significantly higher percentages of HoHs in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1 report being on a waitlist (75% vs 62%) or having contacted 211 for assistance (85% vs 78%). For Cohort 2, families who report being on a waitlist could be referring to the coordinated entry roster and/or the waitlists of individual providers, especially those operating outside the coordinated entry systems. For Cohort 1, the waitlists would refer exclusively to those operated by providers.

Figure 7. Number of Weeks to Receive Assistance



To investigate whether individual characteristics and county are related to the length of time it took for families to receive assistance from their first request for assistance, multivariate regression was conducted. When controlling for demographic and background characteristics of the HoHs of families, the difference in the time to entry between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 is no longer significant (Table 11). Families that had experienced homelessness prior to the current episode in both cohorts had longer times to receive assistance. Families in King County also had longer waits than families in Pierce County. Other factors—such as age, race, family size, education, employment status at entry, and income—are not related to the length of time to entry, all else being equal. These findings suggest that despite there being differences in wait time between the two time periods, family characteristics and background, especially past homelessness, account for the difference.

Table 11. Predicting Number of Weeks to Receive Assistance for Families Contacting the Homeless System (N=607)

Covariates⁺	Coefficient
<i>Cohort 2 (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	3.275
<i>Age</i>	-0.265
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	-4.874
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	-1.350
<i>Hispanic</i>	-5.651
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	-2.720
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	-1.431
<i>Children living away</i>	-5.637
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	-13.703
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	-6.543
<i>Employed at entry</i>	-9.716
<i>Income at baseline</i>	0.941
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	-4.283
<i>Ever homeless before this episode</i>	15.128*
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	5.630
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	-6.351
<i>R²</i>	0.0678

* County is included in the model as a covariate, but results are not presented in the table; findings indicate families in Pierce County have shorter times to entry into the system than families in King County.

Effects on the Type of Initial Housing Assistance Received

As noted, prior to systems reform, all three counties operated “continuum” models of homeless service delivery in which families were expected to enter shelter first and then typically move to transitional housing to either increase “their readiness” for housing or to wait for receipt of Section 8 vouchers to help subsidize market-rate housing. Systems changes in all three counties since 2011/2012 have aimed to change the culture in the systems from a continuum model to one that prioritizes a Housing First orientation, offering more options for families to live in permanent housing as soon as possible.

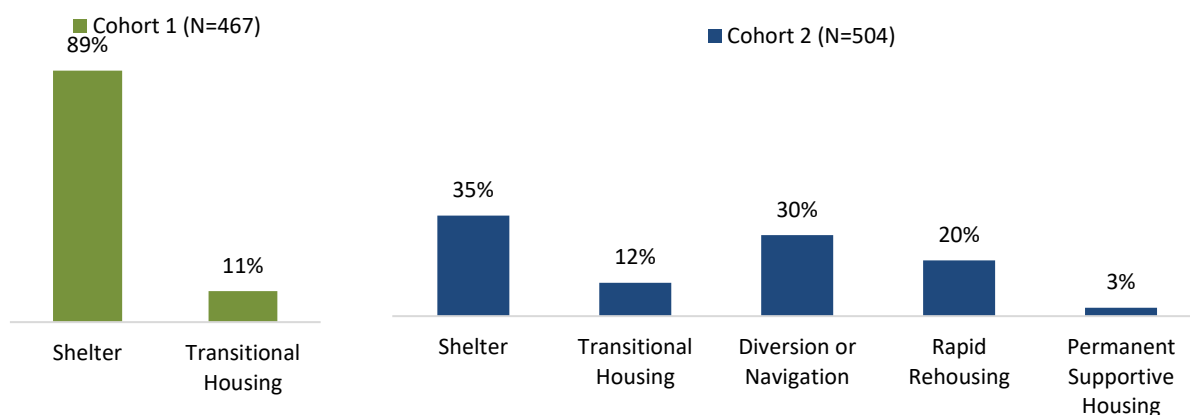
Figure 8 presents the findings for both cohorts on the percentages of families receiving different types of initial homeless assistance. As expected, prior to systems reform, the overwhelming majority of families (89%) in Cohort 1 received shelter as their first assistance in the system, with a smaller

percentage receiving transitional housing as their first assistance.¹⁷ (As described later, as expected, many Cohort 1 families also received transitional housing in the six months after receiving shelter.)

After reform, five different assistance options were available to families in each of the three counties.¹⁸ Shelter continued to be the first type of assistance received by more than a third of the Cohort 2 families, with Snohomish County having the highest percentage (44%) and King County the lowest (28%). The two options most aligned with the Housing First orientation, diversion/housing navigation services and rapid re-housing, were received by 29 percent and 20 percent of the families, respectively. Diversion was a central resource for families in King County (36%) and Pierce County (18%), providing flexible funds for families to either remain in the housing they were at imminent risk of losing or moving to another setting quickly. In Snohomish County, housing navigation services, received by 31 percent of the families, were provided and included flexible funds and “light touch” case management to help connect families to needed services while waiting for other housing assistance to become available.

Rapid re-housing has increased in all three counties as an intervention to help families re-enter the housing market. During Cohort 2, 23 percent of King County families, 26 percent of Pierce County families, and 10 percent of Snohomish County families received rapid re-housing as their initial homeless assistance. Receiving rapid re-housing means a family is receiving case management support to find housing in the community and is provided financial assistance for a time-limited period once housing is located. As discussed below, during the time families were looking for housing, they could be living in a variety of circumstances. In addition, some families enrolled in rapid re-housing did not find housing within the six months. In fact, of the families enrolled in rapid re-housing assistance as their initial homeless assistance, 29 percent did not move into the housing within six months.

Figure 8. Initial Type of Homeless Assistance Received



* There is a statistically significant difference between cohorts in the distribution of types of initial homeless assistance.

¹⁷ One family in Cohort 1 entered directly into permanent housing.

¹⁸ The percentage of families that received shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing in our Cohort 2 sample is comparable to that reported in the HMIS for each of the three counties during the data collection time period. Diversion/navigation services are not uniformly recorded in HMIS so we are unable to compare those percentages.

A portion of Cohort 2 families also entered transitional housing (12%) and permanent supportive housing (3%) as their initial homeless assistance. Snohomish County had the highest percentage (15%) in transitional housing, while King County had the lowest (9%).

As with families in Cohort 1, families in Cohort 2 may have received additional types of assistance following the initial homeless assistance. For example, families that first received diversion could have subsequently received shelter or rapid re-housing if the diversion assistance was not ultimately successful. Also, particularly in Pierce and Snohomish Counties, rapid re-housing assistance was often provided to families who first entered shelter. By six months, in fact, 32 percent of families that received shelter first indicated that they were subsequently offered rapid re-housing assistance. Future analyses will examine patterns in the types of assistance all families receive by examining the trajectories of their housing situations over the 18 months after receiving their initial homeless assistance and up to 30 months for the subset of Cohort 2 families receiving shelter or rapid re-housing as their initial homeless assistance.

Differences Among Families Receiving Different Types of Initial Homeless Assistance in Cohort 2

Among families in Cohort 2, individual characteristics are not related to the types of initial homeless assistance they received. Table 12 presents the results of a multinomial logistic model that compares the odds of receiving different types of assistance to the odds of receiving shelter. In all three counties, the receipt of this assistance pre-dates the inclusion of vulnerability prioritization tools in the coordinated entry systems. Instead, receipt of one type of assistance over another is likely due to a combination of factors, including coordinated entry placement decisions, provider denials and selection, and family refusals and selection. At the time Cohort 2 families were recruited, families in all three counties had the option to refuse at least one coordinated entry placement without losing their place on the list if they did not feel it would be a good fit for their needs.

Table 12. Predicting Differences in Families Assigned to Different Types of Initial Homeless Assistance in Cohort 2 (N=467) (as measured in odds ratios¹⁹)

Odds Ratios			
Covariates ⁺ <i>all differences are compared to Shelter (N=167)</i>	Diversion or Navigation (N=134)	Transitional or Permanent Supportive Housing (N=72)	Rapid Re- Housing (N=94)
<i>Age</i>	1.017	0.965	0.993
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>			
<i>Black</i>	1.300	0.345	0.632
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	0.897	0.386	1.074
<i>Hispanic</i>	1.169	0.783	0.641
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	0.911	0.557	0.691
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	0.922	0.807	0.853
<i>Children living away</i>	1.392	0.905	1.285
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>			
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	0.752	1.435	1.005
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	1.205	0.944	1.165
<i>Employed at entry</i>	1.583	0.307	1.115
<i>Total income</i>	1.00	1.111	1.223
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	1.083	0.249	0.911
<i>Nights homeless in six months before entering the system</i>	0.995	1.003	0.999
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	0.694	0.358	0.849
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	1.625	1.016	1.199
<i>-2 Log likelihood</i>	1120.133		

⁺ County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; findings indicate that families in Snohomish County are less likely to be placed in rapid re-housing than families in King County.

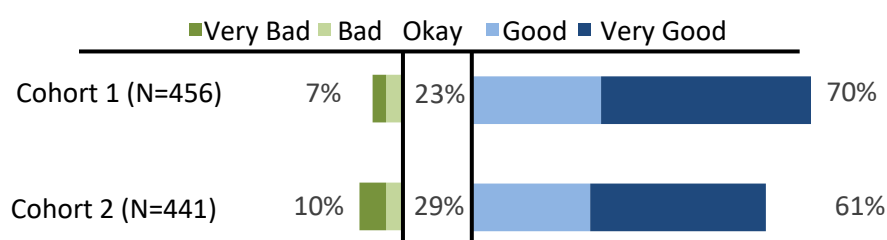
Families' Satisfaction with Their Initial Homeless Assistance

Families' HoHs in both cohorts were asked to assess the degree to which the initial homeless assistance met their family needs, from a very good fit to a very bad fit. HoHs in both cohorts during the baseline interviews largely reported that the type of initial homeless assistance they received met their family's needs. However, families in Cohort 1, who predominately received shelter or transitional housing as an initial homeless assistance type, reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction than families in Cohort 2, who received more varied types of initial homeless assistance. As Figure 9 indicates, the majority of

¹⁹ Odds ratios indicate the likelihood of a particular outcome occurring, given the presence of the covariates, compared to the odds of the outcome not occurring in the absence of those covariates. Odds ratios above one indicate an increased likelihood of the outcome occurring, and odds ratios less than one indicate a decreased likelihood of the outcome occurring.

families in Cohort 1 reported that the fit of the assistance they received was good (26%) or very good (44%). In contrast, in Cohort 2, significantly smaller percentages of families reported the fit of assistance received was good (24%) or very good (37%). It is important to note that families reported their satisfaction with the type of assistance they received at the baseline interview, which typically occurred between one and three months after program entry. At the time of the baseline interview, families in Cohort 1 were largely still residing in the same location as their initial type of assistance (i.e., shelter or transitional housing). In contrast, families in Cohort 2, especially those that received diversion/navigation services or rapid re-housing, may have been living in homeless or doubled up situations during the baseline interview while they looked for housing.

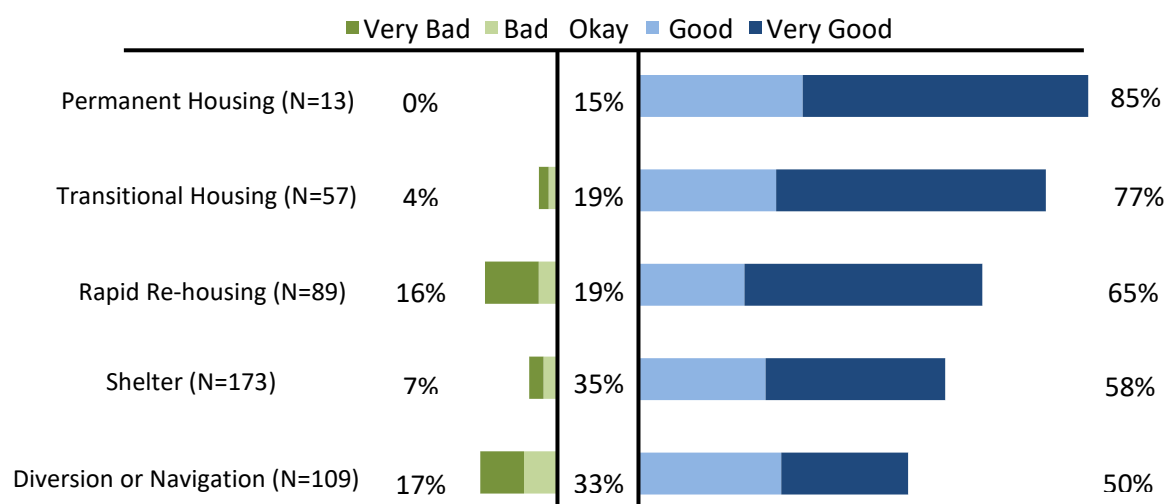
Figure 9. Fit of Type of Initial Homeless Assistance Received



Among families in Cohort 2, the most positive initial ratings were reported by families that received permanent housing, followed by families in transitional housing and rapid re-housing (see Figure 10). The pattern of findings is relatively similar across the counties.

Future analyses will look at families' assessment of the assistance they receive based on their living situations at different time points.

Figure 10. Fit of Type of Initial Homeless Assistance Received by Type for Cohort 2 (N=441)



Section IV: Effects of Systems Reform on Families' Outcomes

In the six months after receiving their initial homeless assistance, families served after systems reform (Cohort 2), compared to families served prior to reform (Cohort 1), were significantly more likely to:

- *be in their own housing,*
- *access that housing faster,*
- *spend more time in that housing, and*
- *spend less time homeless (including shelter and on the streets) despite having spent more time homeless before entry into a program.*

Although some individual factors help to explain these residential differences, the cohort difference is strongly significant even when these other factors are considered. This suggests that the system reforms, especially the increased availability of rapid re-housing and diversion assistance, have influenced these outcomes above and beyond individual factors. Context changes between Cohort 1 and 2 also may have influenced the outcomes, but as the changes have led to tighter housing markets, their likely influence would be to make it more difficult for families to find and keep housing. Therefore, it is possible that the housing outcomes would have been even stronger if the housing markets had not changed so dramatically.

Other family outcomes at six months do not show significant differences between the cohorts, including parent-child intactness (i.e., having all one's children in one's custody), income, and HoH employment.

For school-aged children, chronic absenteeism and the rate of school change at six months do not significantly differ between the cohorts. School-aged children in Cohort 2 experience a slight significant decrease over time in their rates of changing schools due to a move, in contrast to children in Cohort 1, but the overall difference between cohorts is not significant.

Families' Housing Outcomes Six Months After Receiving Assistance

The main goals of the Family Homeless Systems Initiative are to reduce the time families experience homelessness, increase their access to stable housing, and decrease their returns to homelessness. At six months, the focus of our analysis is on understanding the extent to which families served in the homeless housing and service delivery systems after systems reform have increased access to permanent housing, more time in that housing, and less time homeless (either in shelter or in places not meant for human habitation) compared to families served prior to the systems reform. Returns to homelessness were not examined at six months as the timeframe is considered too short to sensitively measure this variable. Returns will be examined in the 18-month analysis.

Living Arrangement at Six Months: We first examined where families were living six months after their initial receipt of assistance. As Figure 11 indicates, half of the families in Cohort 2 (52%) were living in

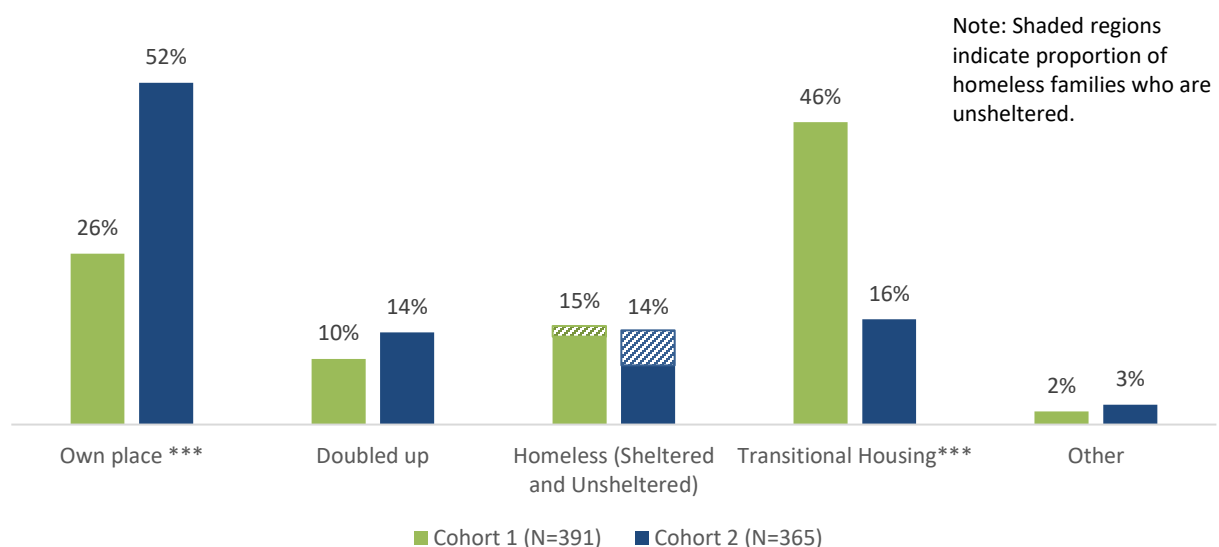
their own housing six months following receipt of their initial homeless assistance, compared to 26 percent of families in Cohort 1. The increase between the cohorts in living in one's home at six months is largely due to the receipt of financial assistance through rapid re-housing. Similar proportions of families in both cohorts are living in their own housing at six months without any assistance (17% in Cohort 1 vs. 14% in Cohort 2), but a significantly larger proportion of families in Cohort 2 (35%) compared to Cohort 1 (9%) are in their own housing with financial assistance.²⁰ In Cohort 2, this assistance appears to be a mix of support, including rapid re-housing and support through other types of assistance.²¹ In Cohort 1, the financial assistance most often received was a Section 8 housing subsidy.

The use of transitional housing is another key change in residential arrangements between the two cohorts. Significantly fewer Cohort 2 families (16%) were living in transitional housing at six months, compared to nearly half (46%) of Cohort 1 families.

Similar percentages of families in each of the cohorts were living doubled up (14% in Cohort 2 and 10% in Cohort 1) and homeless (including sheltered and unsheltered) (14% in Cohort 2 and 15% in Cohort 1). Among those families that are homeless, a slightly higher percentage of Cohort 2 families were unsheltered at six months compared to families in Cohort 1 (5% vs. 1%).

The pattern of living arrangements across the counties is relatively comparable.

Figure 11. Where Families Are Living Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance



*** Indicates a statistically significant difference (p<0.001) between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

²⁰ An additional 3 percent of Cohort 2 families in their own place at six months received limited assistance, such as security deposits or moving expenses.

²¹ Families were not always clear or accurate in their reports of the type of assistance they were receiving. We are conducting a further validation of the types of assistance received with responses on other items, as well as with other data forthcoming from the ICDB.

Length of Stay in Different Types of Residential Arrangements: Length of stay in each type of location was measured for all nights in the six-month period following receipt of initial homeless assistance. As Table 13 shows, families in Cohort 2 compared to families in Cohort 1 had significantly longer average stays in their own place. Families in Cohort 2 spent, on average, more than twice the number nights in their own housing than families in Cohort 1 (61.4 vs. 24.6 nights). Nearly 40 percent of Cohort 2 families had been in their own housing 90 days or more, and 18 percent were in that housing 144 days or more. In contrast, fewer than 15 percent of Cohort 1 families had been in their housing 90 days or more and fewer than 4 percent had been in that housing 144 days or more.

Table 13. Mean Number of Nights in Each Location

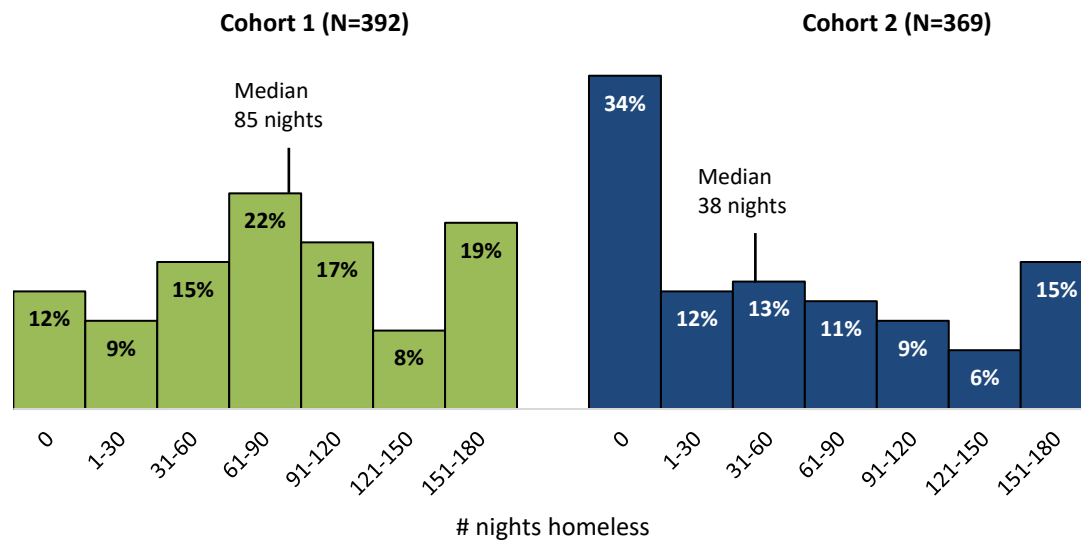
	Cohort 1 (N=392)	Cohort 2 (N=369)
Own place	24.6	61.4***
Doubled up	12.5	29.4***
Homeless, in shelter	84.6	43.0***
Homeless, in a place not meant for human habitation	0.9	15.5***
Transitional housing	54.6	24.0***
Other locations	2.5	4.8
Missing	0.1	1.0

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Compared to Cohort 1 families, Cohort 2 families also had significantly more nights doubled up and in other locations, such as hotels and hospitals. They also experienced a greater number of nights in unsheltered homeless situations, yet significantly shorter stays in shelter and transitional housing than families in Cohort 1. King and Snohomish Counties show the same pattern of changes between Cohorts 1 and 2 for all location types. Pierce County showed the same patterns of change for time in own place, sheltered and unsheltered homeless, and other locations. In contrast to the tri-county findings, there were no differences between the cohorts in Pierce County in time spent doubled up or in transitional housing.

As Figure 12 indicates, in the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance, a higher proportion of Cohort 1 families (88%) than Cohort 2 families (65%) experienced at least one night homeless, either in shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation. The median number of nights homeless for Cohort 2 (38 nights) is almost a third of the median for Cohort 1 (85 nights). Interestingly, however, statistically similar percentages of each Cohort (19% in Cohort 1 and 15% in Cohort 2) are homeless nearly the entire six months. When we examine the distribution of nights homeless for each cohort by county, only Snohomish County shows a slightly different distribution for Cohort 2, having a higher median of nights homeless (69 nights) than the tri-county median.

Figure 12. Distribution of Nights Homeless (Sheltered and Unsheltered) in the Six Months Following Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance



Because families differed between the two cohorts in ways that could potentially affect their housing outcomes, multivariate regressions of the key outcome variables – nights stably housed and nights homeless- were conducted using propensity score weighting to balance the differences between the groups. Additional covariates were included in the analysis to control on remaining individual differences in order to discern if there is a cohort difference.

The regression findings in Table 14 show that Cohort 2 families had significantly more nights in their own housing than Cohort 1 families, even when other factors were considered. There are not direct relationships between individual-level factors and length of stay in housing.

Table 14. Predicting Nights in One's Own Housing After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=687)

Covariates⁺	Coefficient
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	33.062**
<i>Age</i>	0.381
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	1.203
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	0.661
<i>Hispanic</i>	-11.164
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	-2.133
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	-4.417
<i>Children living away</i>	-1.757
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	5.569
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	14.679
<i>Employed at entry</i>	14.223
<i>Income at baseline</i>	2.770
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	-1.766
<i>Nights in own place in six months before entering the system</i>	0.009
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	4.555
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	-1.356
<i>R²</i>	0.1321

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Similarly, the regression findings in Table 15 indicate that families in Cohort 2 spent significantly fewer nights homeless during the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance than did families in Cohort 1, controlling for differences in demographic and family characteristics. Longer periods of time homeless also are related to having a spouse or partner, greater numbers of children, lower income levels, and longer homelessness spells in the six months prior to receipt of initial homeless assistance.²²

²² Measures of the economic climate, such as rental vacancy rate and unemployment rate, are highly correlated with cohort and thus cannot be included in the models. When we examine the role of vacancy rate within cohort (i.e., the vacancy rate at the time each person enrolls in the study over the data collection period), we see no relationship between the context and the length of time a person is in their own place.

Table 15. Predicting Nights Homeless After Receipt of First Assistance (N=687)

Covariates⁺	Coefficient
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	-39.420**
<i>Age</i>	0.361
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	4.772
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	3.947
<i>Hispanic</i>	8.205
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	18.347**
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	7.298**
<i>Children living away</i>	7.024
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	6.850
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	-0.142
<i>Employed at entry</i>	10.431
<i>Income at baseline</i>	-4.536**
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	15.007
<i>Nights homeless in six months before entering the system</i>	0.168**
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	-13.824
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	2.139
<i>R²</i>	0.2047

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Time to Permanent Housing: To test whether families in Cohort 2 access permanent housing faster than families in Cohort 1, we conducted a survival analysis. Survival analysis is a statistical technique for modeling the expected duration of time until an event happens (Singer & Willett, 2003), such as time to accessing permanent housing from the receipt of initial homeless assistance. As a multivariate technique, it allows us to examine factors that predict (1) the probability of moving to permanent housing and (2) how long it takes to move.

The findings presented in Table 16 indicate that families in Cohort 2 were significantly more likely than families in Cohort 1 to be in permanent housing at any point in the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance. Other factors, such as age, race, family size, income level, and the HoH's education and employment status are not related to the probability of being in permanent housing during this time period.

Table 16. Predicting the Probability of Being in Permanent Housing (N=645)

Covariates⁺	Hazard Ratio
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	1.649*
<i>Age</i>	1.005
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	1.118
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	1.122
<i>Hispanic</i>	0.713
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	1.121
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	0.866
<i>Children living away</i>	1.134
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	1.169
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	1.585
<i>Employed at entry</i>	1.502
<i>Income at baseline</i>	1.100
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	1.013
<i>Nights in own place in six months before entering the system</i>	0.999
<i>Any reported domestic in past 3 months</i>	1.529
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	0.963
<i>-2 Log likelihood</i>	3094.879

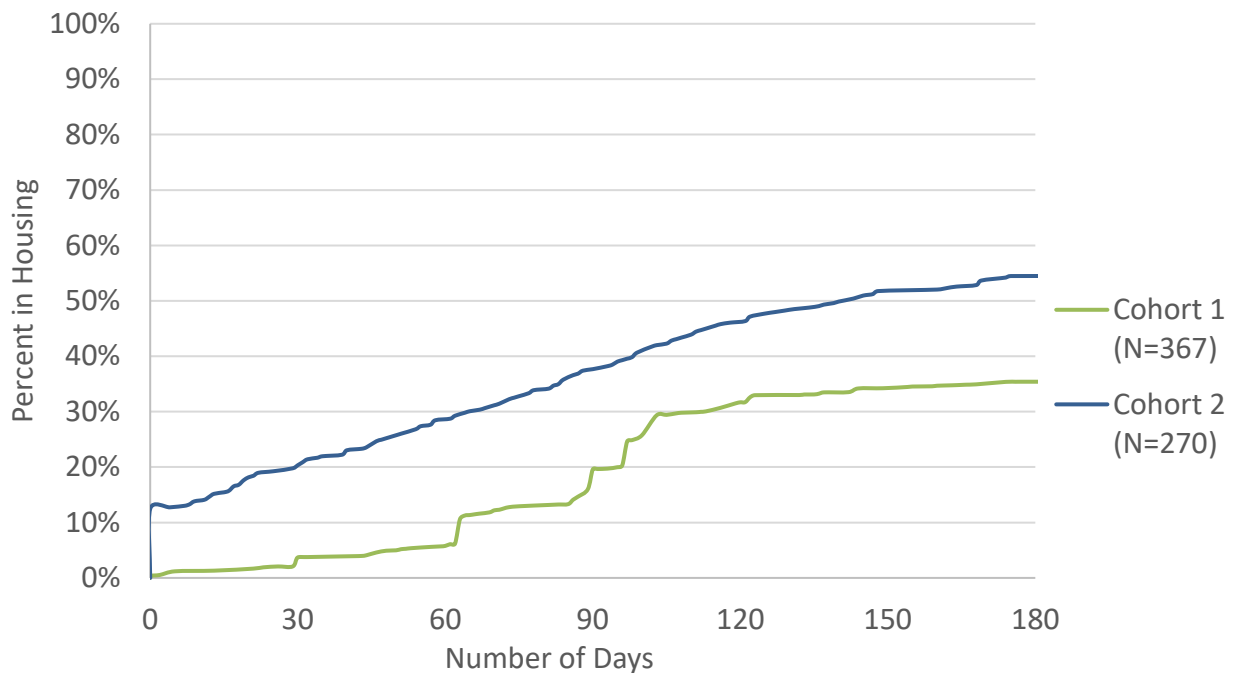
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Figure 13 graphs the probability that families are in permanent housing across the six-month period following receipt of first assistance. Over time, larger proportions of Cohort 2 families compared to Cohort 1 families become housed. At 90 days, for example, 20 percent of Cohort 1 families are in housing compared to 38 percent of Cohort 2 families. Six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance, 55 percent of families in Cohort 2 had moved into housing. In contrast, only 36 percent of families in Cohort 1 had moved into housing, leaving 64 percent of these families not yet in permanent housing six months after initial homeless assistance.²³

²³ The percentages of living in permanent housing at six month on Figure 11 differ from the percentages on Figure 13 as Figure 11 presents raw data and Figure 13 presents predicted probabilities, taking into account individual factors.

Figure 13. Probability of Families in Each Cohort Being in Permanent Housing Across Six Months (N=641)



Parent-Child Intactness Six Months After Receiving Assistance

One of the hoped-for outcome variables to be achieved through increased access to and time in permanent housing is increases in children either remaining with the family or being reunified.²⁴ Descriptive analyses (Figure 14) show that comparable percentages of families in both cohorts have one or more children living away from the family at the time they receive initial homeless assistance (20% for Cohort 1, 25% for Cohort 2) and six months after entry (20% for Cohort 1 and 24% for Cohort 2). In each cohort, there were a small number of reunifications (4% in Cohort 1 and 5% in Cohort 2) and new separations (5% in Cohort 1 and 6% in Cohort 2) between the two time periods. These findings are comparable in each of the three counties.

Logistic regression was conducted to examine whether Cohort 2 families were more likely than Cohort 1 families to be intact (have all their children with them) six months after receiving the initial homeless assistance, controlling on individual factors. The results confirm that families in Cohort 2 were no more likely than Cohort 1 families to be intact at the six-month time point (Table 17). Intactness at six months is highly predicted by intactness at baseline (having one or more children away). Intactness is not predicted by the number of children a family has, presence of a spouse or partner at baseline, education and employment, length of time spent homeless, or reports of recent domestic violence.

²⁴ We will be conducting further analyses to examine the causal relationship between residential stability and family intactness in future reports.

Figure 14. Parent-Child Intactness at Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance and Six Months Later

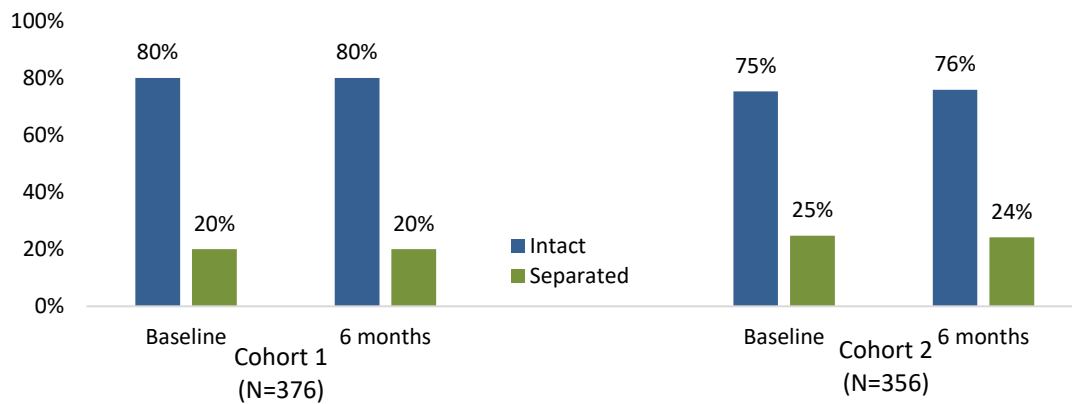


Table 17. Predicting Parent-Child Intactness Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=661)

Covariates ⁺	Odds Ratio
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	0.797
<i>Age</i>	1.030
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	1.466
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	1.217
<i>Hispanic</i>	3.061
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	1.170
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	0.914
<i>Children living away</i>	0.015**
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	1.552
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	1.653
<i>Employed at entry</i>	1.243
<i>Income at baseline</i>	1.108
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	1.350
<i>Nights homeless in six months before entering the system</i>	1.000
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	1.200
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	0.420
<i>4-2 Log likelihood</i>	344.100

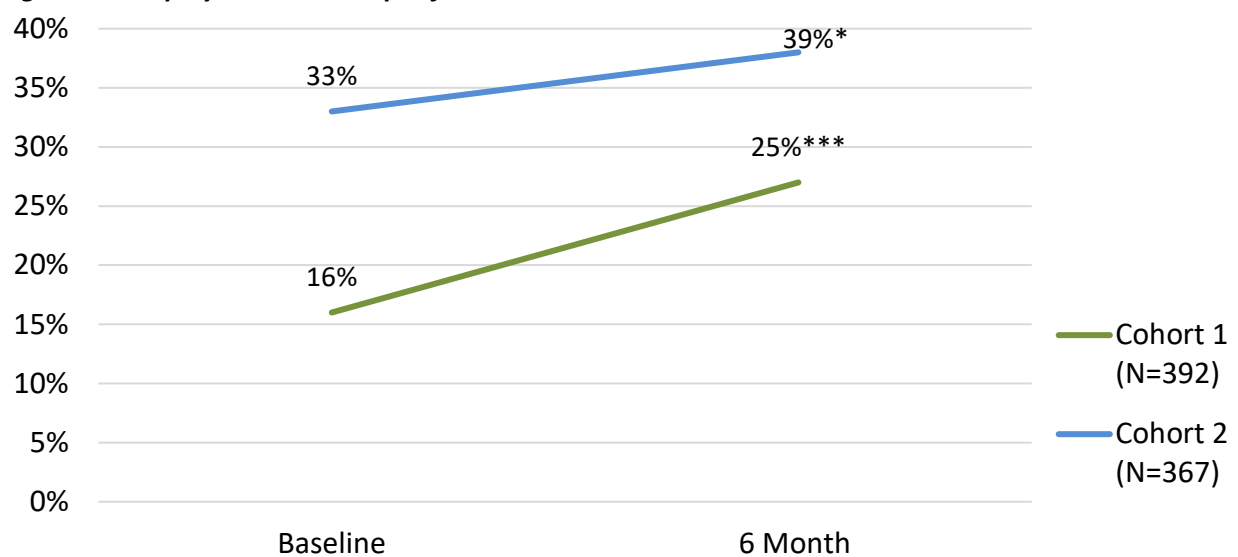
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Families' Employment Six Months After Receiving Initial Homeless Assistance

As described earlier, families in Cohort 2 differed significantly from families in Cohort 1 on employment at baseline. At six months, this difference remains, but the proportion of increase between baseline and six months is comparable for both cohorts (Figure 15). Upon receipt of initial homeless assistance, nearly twice the percentage of HoHs in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1 was working (33% to 16%). Families in both cohorts experienced significant increases in employment six months after they received the initial homeless assistance, but the difference in the amount of increase between the two cohorts was not statistically significant in bivariate tests. The patterns of change over time in each cohort as well as the differences between cohorts vary among the counties (see Figures E-8A to E-8C and Appendix E). However, none of the cohort differences are significant.

Figure 15. Employment at Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance and Six Months Later



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$; Indicates significant change across waves within cohort.

To control on the baseline differences between the two cohorts, we developed an analytic model to test the rate of change between the two cohorts, including a number of covariates. Table 18 presents the findings of a logistic regression²⁵ on employment, showing that Cohort 2 HoHs were not more likely than Cohort 1 HoHs to be employed six months after receipt of initial homeless assistance when individual differences are controlled. Employment status at entry is a significant predictor of employment at six months. HoHs in both cohorts are more likely to have been employed at the six-month point if they were employed at the time they received the initial homeless assistance. Other factors that did not predict whether a HoH is employed at six months include the HoH's age, race, education, having a child living away, past felony, prior homeless experience, recent domestic violence, and mental health concerns, as well as presence of a spouse or partner and household income at baseline.

²⁵ We are also exploring the possibilities of conducting a path analysis to examine the relationship between housing and employment for the 18-month analysis.

Table 18. Predicting HoH's Employment Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=691)

Covariates⁺	Odds Ratio
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	1.444
<i>Age</i>	1.015
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	1.709
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	1.708
<i>Hispanic</i>	0.662
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	1.485
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	1.021
<i>Children living away</i>	0.461
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	1.114
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	0.999
<i>Employed at entry</i>	5.413**
<i>Income at baseline</i>	1.019
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	1.088
<i>Nights homeless in six months before entering the system</i>	0.997
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	1.631
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	0.914
<i>-2 Log likelihood</i>	714.096

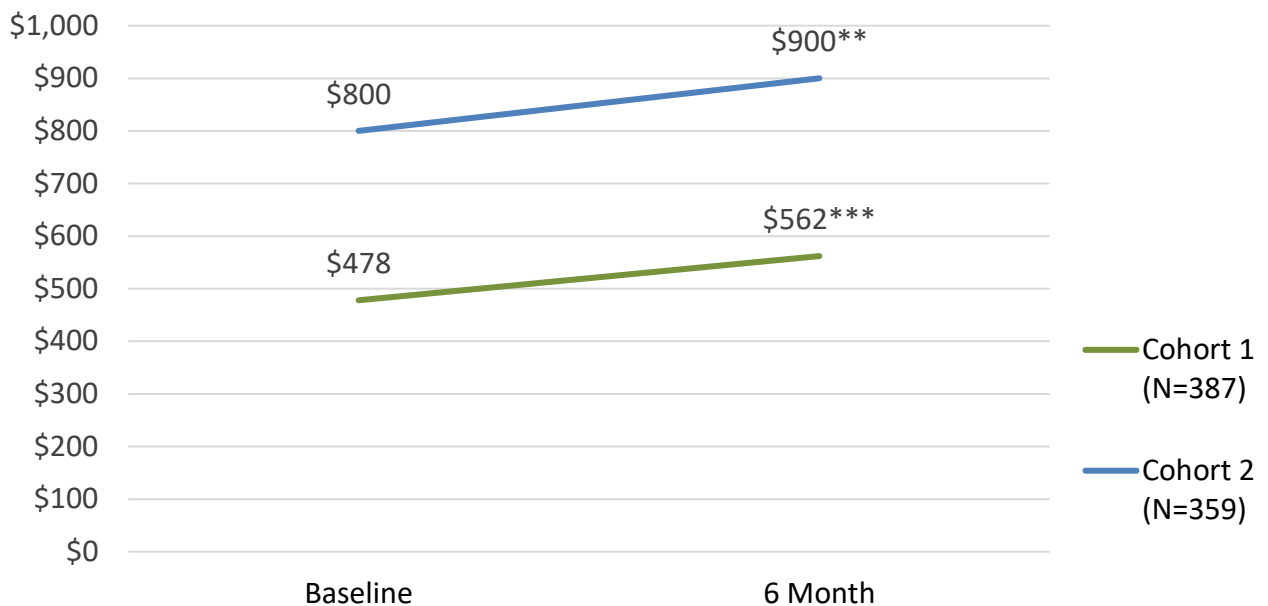
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Families' Income Six Months After Receiving Initial Homeless Assistance

Cohort 2 families had more than one and a half times the income of Cohort 1 families (\$800 to \$478) at the time of the baseline interview (Figure 16). At six months, both cohorts of families experience significant increases in income from the baseline, but the proportion of increases between the two time points is comparable for the two cohorts. When we examine income by county, family income increases for both the cohorts, but is generally not a statistically significant increase. As with the employment outcome, we developed an analytic model to test the rate of change between the two cohorts, controlling on baseline differences by including a number of covariates.

Figure 16. Median Monthly Income at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$; Indicates significant change across waves within cohort.

Table 19 displays the results of a multivariate regression predicting income at six months, showing that Cohort 2 families were no more likely than Cohort 1 families to realize an increase in income at the six-month time point, controlling on individual differences between the cohorts. The amount of family income at the six month interview was predicted by a number of individual variables, including the amount of income a family reported at baseline, age, education, and family size. Families with greater incomes at the six-month point in both cohorts were more likely to have HoHs who were older and multi-racial or a race other than black or white and who had more education as well as fewer indicators of mental health concerns. The families also had higher household incomes at baseline and more children and experienced fewer nights homeless in the period leading up to receiving first assistance. Factors examined that did not influence the amount of income at the six-month interview included county, whether the HoH had a spouse or partner, family intactness, employment at entry, whether the HoH had had a prior felony, and reports of recent domestic violence.

Table 19. Predicting Monthly Income Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=681)

Covariates⁺	Coefficient
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	0.147
<i>Age</i>	0.038**
<i>Race (compared to white)</i>	
<i>Black</i>	0.051
<i>Multi-racial or other race</i>	0.460
<i>Hispanic</i>	0.169
<i>Spouse/partner</i>	0.116
<i>Number of children under 19 years old</i>	0.195**
<i>Children living away</i>	-0.291
<i>Education (compared to HS/GED)</i>	
<i>Less than a HS degree</i>	-0.062
<i>More than a HS degree</i>	0.585**
<i>Employed at entry</i>	-0.035
<i>Income at baseline</i>	0.172**
<i>Ever convicted of a felony</i>	0.117
<i>Nights homeless in six months before entering the system</i>	-0.002
<i>Any reported domestic violence in past 3 months</i>	-0.384
<i>Mental health indicator</i>	-0.276
<i>Days from program entry to six-month interview</i>	-0.002
<i>R²</i>	0.1841

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

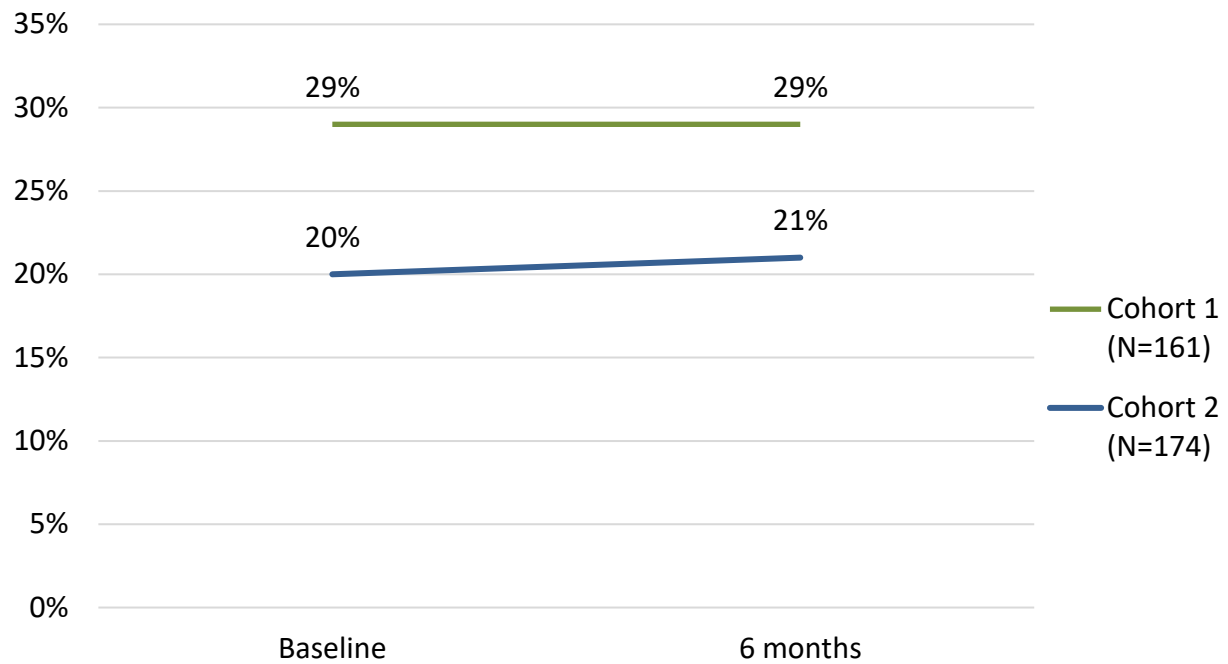
⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Children's School Attendance and Stability Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance

We also examined changes over time in school attendance and stability for the school-aged target children. As previously noted, a smaller percentage of children in Cohort 2 (21%) compared to Cohort 1 (29%) were chronically absent (i.e., had six or more absences from school in the three months prior to receiving the initial homeless assistance). As Figure 17 indicates, the rates of chronic absenteeism were similarly stable across the six-month period for each of the cohorts. Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 changes in chronic absenteeism over time in each of the counties are also not significant.

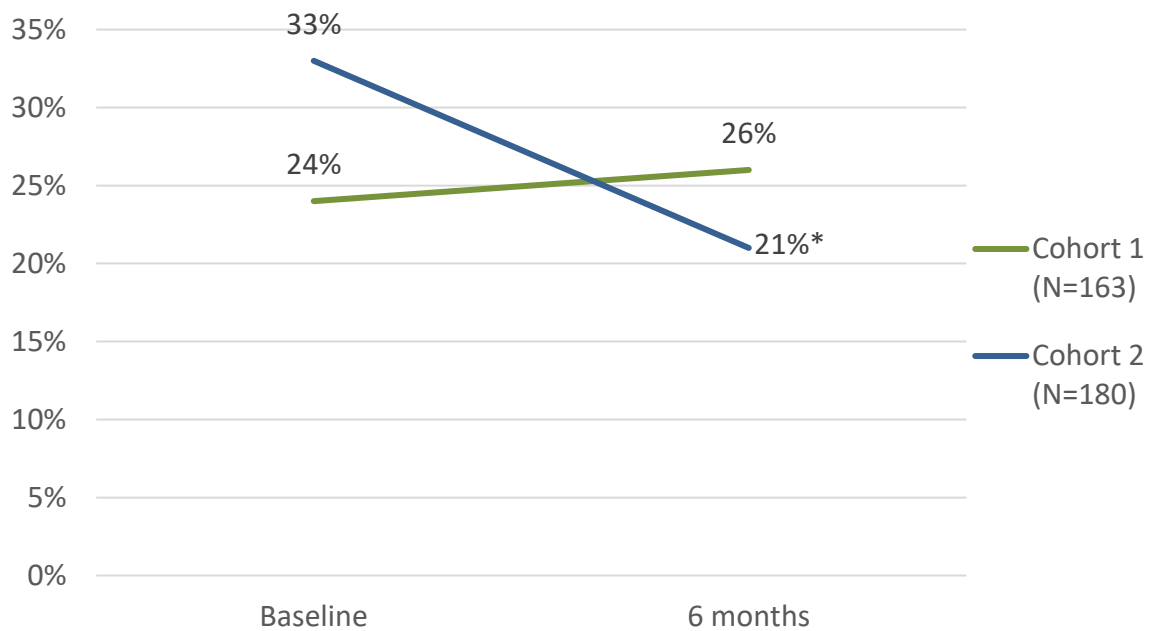
As Figure 18 indicates, in Cohort 2 had a higher (non-significant) proportion of children who changed schools when they entered the system than children in Cohort 1 (33% vs. 24%). While rates of school stability remained similar for children in Cohort 1, a statistically smaller percentage of children in Cohort 2 changed schools because of a move following receipt of initial homeless assistance. In Cohort 2, each of the counties experienced the same downward trend between baseline and six months; however, none of these are statistically significant.

Figure 17. Percentage of School-Aged Children with Chronic Absenteeism at Baseline and Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001; Indicates significant change across waves within cohort.

Figure 18. Percentage of School-Aged Children Who Changed Schools at Baseline and Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001; Indicates significant change across waves within cohort.

In order to examine whether there are differences between the two cohorts in the changes over time, we produced logistic regression models including a number of covariates (see Table 20). Both models indicate that there are not significant differences between the cohorts in school attendance or stability in the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance. Additionally, children's individual characteristics are not related to their schooling outcomes. Future analyses with longer time frames will allow us to examine the relationship between duration in housing and school outcomes for children.

Table 20. Predicting Chronic Absenteeism Among School-Aged Children Six Months After Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=342)

Covariates ⁺	Odds Ratio
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	0.626
<i>Age</i>	1.030
<i>Gender</i>	0.850
<i>Very good/excellent health (6 months)</i>	0.517
<i>Any special needs at baseline</i>	2.263
<i>Chronic absenteeism at baseline</i>	1.929
<i>Changed schools for a move since baseline</i>	1.630
<i>-2 Log likelihood</i>	339.912

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Table 21. Predicting School Stability among School-Aged Children Six Months after Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=358)

Covariates ⁺	Odds Ratio
<i>Cohort (compared to Cohort 1)</i>	0.901
<i>Age</i>	0.993
<i>Gender</i>	0.926
<i>Very good/excellent health (6 months)</i>	1.182
<i>Any special needs at baseline</i>	1.513
<i>Chronic absenteeism at baseline</i>	2.023
<i>-2 Log likelihood</i>	369.413

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

⁺ County is included in the model but results are not presented; there are no significant differences across counties.

Section V: Summary, Implications, and Next Steps

The six-month system and housing outcomes of the Homeless Families Systems Initiative are promising and in the right direction for achieving longer-term outcomes for families struggling with homelessness. The systems have shifted in their orientation from being continuums that emphasized transitional housing to those that are emphasizing Housing First. This shift has led to families having greater and quicker access to permanent housing and more nights in housing and fewer nights homeless, even with the competing pressure of an ever tightening housing market. These findings are highly significant and persist even when a host of family characteristics are considered.

Changes in the systems that had taken place by 2016 had not, however, improved the families' experiences in seeking help. Families seeking assistance after coordinated entry had been put into place continued to experience many of the same challenges families had experienced without coordinated entry. Long periods waiting for assistance continued, in part due to challenges in trying to match families to different housing programs with restrictive criteria and due to difficulties in having sufficient capacity in the system. These challenges have been the focus of continued reform in the three counties since 2016.

Families' parent-child intactness, household income, and HoH employment during the six months following receipt of initial homeless assistance do not appear to have been affected by systems reform. School absenteeism and school moves also do not appear to be affected. It is likely that a more sensitive test of these outcomes will be at the 18-month follow-up mark, when a longer period of time has elapsed for these outcomes to be achieved. At that time, we will also be able to examine the relationship of the outcomes to greater periods of housing stability.

There are several key limitations to the findings that need to be considered. The study is not using a randomized design; we did not randomly assign families to be in one cohort over the other. We have attempted to control for the differences in families between the cohorts that could confound the results, through both the use of propensity score weighting and the inclusion of key covariates in the models. There is always the possibility, however, that there are hidden biases that account for the difference in outcomes. Given the nature of the systems changes and their alignment with the housing outcome findings, this alternative explanation is less plausible. The fact that there were not similar cohort findings for employment and income, in which the cohorts were different at baseline, provides even more compelling evidence that the change in housing outcome is a function, at least in part, of the changes in the systems.

The study is also only a partial test of the systems reform. We included only families who received some type of assistance from a homeless service provider in each cohort. We could not track families in Cohort 1 who were turned away because there was not capacity in the shelters, nor could we track families in Cohort 2 who went through coordinated entry in each county but who may not have been able to receive assistance. The samples are comparable between the cohorts, but we cannot generalize the findings of the study to families who were not successful in receiving assistance.

Additionally, the data included here are self-reported by families, not independently verified (with the exception of date of receipt of initial homeless assistance, which was verified by providers). As a result, certain variables are especially subject to errors in recall. For example, we ask families to report when they first sought assistance and the number of calls made. These data may differ from that which is recorded in the counties' coordinated entry data systems. If we are able to access coordinated entry and HMIS data, we will attempt to verify these findings.

The nature of the context changed dramatically over the course of the study and continues to change. We attempted to include measures of the context in the models to control on the influences in the economic climate on outcomes. However, because these changes have been highly linear, they correlate almost perfectly with our cohorts. To try to have an understanding of the role of context on a family's ability to exit homelessness, we examined whether quarterly vacancy rate (i.e., the quarterly vacancy rate at the time of a family's receipt of initial assistance) was related to number of nights in housing and number of nights homeless in the six-month period. Quarterly vacancy rate did not relate to either of these variables. Moreover, the six-month findings on permanent housing access (with an increase in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1) suggest that (1) changes are occurring despite the tightened housing market and (2) if the context were affecting families' housing outcomes, the change between the cohorts would likely be even greater if the market for Cohort 2 had remained comparable to the market in Cohort 1.

In addition, the reforms occurring under the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative were not occurring in a vacuum, but rather contemporaneously with other policy changes occurring at the state and federal level. These changes likely also had an influence on the work of three counties. The design and intent of the evaluation was to understand the role and contribution that the Initiative made in fostering reform, not to attribute the findings to it. Our qualitative analysis of the systems changes in the three communities, particularly in comparison to the contrast communities, should provide a lens for understanding the contribution of the Initiative to the changes that occurred. This report will be developed in 2019.

Forthcoming analyses of the 18-month data by 2020 will provide more robust indications of the success of the reforms in fostering the housing outcomes. We will be able to understand more completely the rate at which families have entered permanent housing, determine the extent to which they maintain the housing, and examine returns to homelessness. In addition, we will be able to examine longer-term changes in parent-child intactness, employment, income, chronic absenteeism, and school moves, as well as the role that housing may play in mediating those changes. Moreover, the 30-month descriptive analyses of Cohort 2 families that entered the system through shelter or rapid re-housing will provide insights into the trajectories that families take after receiving these two different types of assistance.

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Appendix A. Glossary of Key Terms

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – An economic stimulus bill enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009 to help the United States economy recover from an economic downturn that began in late 2007, referred to as the Great Recession

Centralized Intake — A single place or process for people to access prevention, housing, and/or other services they may need.

Child Absenteeism — A school-aged child having missed six or more days of school in the last three months (or, if summer, the last three months of the previous school year).

Continuum of Care — A regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. Continuums of care represent communities of all kinds, including major cities, suburbs, and rural areas, in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Coordinated Case Management — The coordinated entry system for families experiencing homelessness operated by Snohomish County prior to 2010.

Coordinated Entry — A process developed in a continuum of care to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, have their strengths and needs assessed, are referred, and are connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

Diversion — Financial and case management assistance that is provided to eligible households seeking assistance, which can be used to preserve their current housing or help them find new housing and avoid entering shelter.

Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG) — A federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides funds to states to address homelessness in four key areas: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and rapid housing. Formerly known as the Emergency Shelter Grants Program.

Fair Market Rent — Amount of money a property would rent or lease for if it was available at this time. The fair market rent is used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine how much rent should be covered through Section 8 subsidies.

Head of Household (HoH) — For this study, the only adult in the household or, if there was more than one adult, the person who was most knowledgeable about all family members, typically the mother.

Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 – Legislation signed into law on May 20, 2009. The HEARTH Act amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) — A data management system used by continuums of care (CoCs) across the country to collect client-level data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. The HMIS is used by CoCs to report data to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) — A component of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that provided financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and to help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized.

Housing First — An approach in which individuals or families move into permanent housing directly from homelessness rather than spending a period of time in temporary, service-rich interventions, such as transitional housing, before entering housing.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC) — A point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a continuum of care that tallies, by program type, the number of beds and units available on the night designated for the count.

Housing Navigators — Staff in Snohomish County who work with families at risk of homelessness to identify strategies to resolve their housing situation and connect them to needed services and housing.

Initial Assistance — The first type of assistance that a family receives from the homeless service system. Types include diversion/navigation, shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Median Household Income — The income level earned by a given household where half of the households in the area earn more and half earn less. It is used instead of the average or mean household income because it provides a more accurate picture of an area's economic status.

Parent-Child Intactness — Having all one's children in one's custody.

Permanent Supportive Housing — An evidence-based housing intervention that combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wrap-around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, as well as other people with disabilities.

Point in Time (PIT) Count — An annual count of homeless persons on a single night in January, conducted by a set of volunteers canvassing to identify individuals living on the streets and other outdoor areas as well as in shelters within a specified geographic area. PIT counts are conducted in communities throughout the country.

Prevention — Assistance that provides financial support and services to aid households at risk of homelessness in preserving their current housing situation when they experience some financial instability.

Prevention Navigators — Staff in Snohomish County who work with families at risk of homelessness to identify strategies to preserve their current housing or identify new housing and connect them to needed services.

Progressive Engagement — A case management approach in which an individual or family seeking housing receives a small amount of assistance, tailored to their most critical need, with a keen focus on quickly resolving the housing crisis. The provider can adjust the amount and intensity of assistance received until the individual or family has obtained permanent housing.

Propensity Score Weighting — A statistical adjustment to control for any selection biases in non-experimental studies

Quasi-Experimental Design — A research study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on the target population using treatment and control groups to which participants are not randomly assigned.

Rapid Re-housing — An intervention that provides housing relocation and stabilization services and time limited rental assistance to help individuals or families exit homelessness and quickly return to permanent housing.

Rental Vacancy Rate — The proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant for rent.

School Moves — Whether the target child changed school upon receipt of initial assistance (baseline interview) due to a move (6-month interview).

Section 8 — A common name for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is a federally funded, locally administered rental assistance program that helps low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled afford decent, safe housing in the private market.

Sequestration — Automatic spending cuts to United States federal government spending in particular categories of expenses that began in March 2013.

Sound Families Initiative — An eight-year, \$40 million program launched in 2000, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, aimed at tripling the amount of available transitional housing in Washington State's three most populous counties and pairing it with support services to address family homelessness.

Systems Infrastructure Grants — Grants administered directly by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the designated county leads and intended to support one-time expenditures necessary for the implementation of the county plans.

System Innovation Grant (SIG) — Grants provided to the counties from Building Changes, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to support targeted investments by the county lead organizations and providers to support the implementation of the pillars.

Tailored Services — Efforts to assess families for the services they need and connect them to those services through case management and mainstream service providers.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — A federal program designed to provide families with financial assistance and related support services. States receive block grants to design and operate programs. State-administered programs may include childcare assistance, job preparation, and work assistance.

Transitional Housing — Time limited housing with supportive services meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support, life skills, and, in some cases, education and training.

Appendix B. Family Impact Study Methodology

This brief outlines the Family Impact Study design, participant recruitment, data collection methods, and analytic approach as well as key limitations that need to be considered when applying the findings.

Design

The goal of the Family Impact Study within the Homeless Families Systems Initiative Evaluation is to examine the effects of systems changes aligned with the Initiative's Theory of Action on families' experiences and outcomes. Family outcomes are being assessed through a longitudinal cohort quasi-experimental design in which an "intervention" cohort of families (referred to as Cohort 2) is compared with a "baseline comparison" cohort (referred to as Cohort 1). The intervention cohort involves families who were provided with homeless assistance in one of the three Initiative counties (King, Pierce, and Snohomish), starting in May 2015 following a substantial amount of systems reform aligned with the Theory of Change. The baseline comparison cohort involves families who were provided with homeless assistance in one of the three counties prior to any substantial amount of reform (with recruitment beginning in November 2010).

Data are collected for each cohort over time through in-depth, in-person interviews with the head of household in each family, beginning with a baseline interview conducted as close to initial receipt of homeless assistance as possible, followed by interviews at 6, 12, and 18 months following receipt of the initial homeless assistance.

To control on the extent to which changes in the families' experiences could be due to factors other than the Initiative, we will be constructing comparison groups of families from other counties in Washington State from the Integrated Client Database (ICDB) of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). These administrative data also will be used to enhance the information on the cohort families, especially data on service receipt. We are also collecting data from the subset of families from Cohort 2 who received rapid re-housing and shelter assistance 30 months after entry into the system in order to examine the longer-term housing, income, employment, and family well-being outcomes of families that receive rapid re-housing.

This design is open to several threats to validity that we have attempted to address in our analyses, if not in our data collection. Two of the most plausible threats that are likely creating some non-equivalence between the two cohort samples are (1) differences in how families are selected for assistance between the two time periods and (2) differences in the families who become homeless in each of the time periods. Both of these threats and how we are addressing them are discussed in the sections that follow.

Eligibility, Identification, and Recruitment of Families for the Primary Data Collection

Eligibility and Identification: The key research questions involved assessing the impact of the system on the experiences and outcomes on the broad population of families experiencing homelessness and seeking services. There were no specific inclusion or exclusion criteria relevant to selection, and there were no data sources at the time of our study development (2009) that provided an understanding of the distribution of families receiving homeless services. Therefore, we aimed to recruit as close to a “census” of families entering homeless services as possible for each cohort, with a goal of at least 150 families in each county for the baseline interview. We first identified all shelter and homeless housing providers serving families in the system during each time period and spent considerable time recruiting them to participate in the study. For King County, because of limited resources and the vast number of housing and shelter providers serving families, we selected five providers that had locations across the county and were estimated to serve 80 percent or more of the families in the system. For Pierce and Snohomish Counties, we attempted to involve all housing and shelter providers serving families experiencing homelessness.

All families entering a homeless shelter/housing program in both cohorts were eligible to be included in the study if (1) they had at least one minor child and/or were pregnant and (2) they were able to complete an interview in English or Spanish. We were unable to include non-English/non-Spanish speaking families due to limitations in translating the data collection into the almost 30 other languages that exist, with no one other language being dominant. [These families will be included (de-identified) in our analyses of the ICDB data].

Cohort 1 families were recruited between November 2010 and August 2012. Because shelter was the primary source of initial homeless assistance for families during this time, we worked directly with shelter providers in each county. Families that entered directly into transitional housing with one of these providers were also identified as eligible for participation.

Cohort 2 families were recruited between May 2015 and November 2016, following significant systems changes across the counties. The primary point of first assistance was no longer limited to shelter. Therefore, we worked with each of the counties to determine the key providers of shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing (or permanent housing with supports), and diversion or navigation services. We recruited the providers (most of which had been involved in Cohort 1 and which offer multiple supports) and families in the same manner as in Cohort 1.

It is important to note that our study is focused only on families who **received** some type of homeless assistance in each cohort. We could not track families in Cohort 1 who were turned away because there was not capacity in the shelters, nor could we track families in Cohort 2 who went through coordinated entry in each county but who may not have been able to receive assistance. The samples are comparable between the cohorts, but we cannot generalize the findings of the study to all families who

were seeking homeless assistance as we do not have information for those who were unsuccessful in receiving assistance.

Family Recruitment: When families conducted their initial intake paperwork with shelter or housing assistance staff, the staff provided information about the study (scripted by our evaluation team) and a "consent to contact" form to complete. The consent to contact form allowed provider staff to share the head of household's (HoH's) name, telephone number, and email address with the Westat evaluation team. Forms were sent to us by fax or confidential electronic means. Westat staff would then call the HoH, screen them for eligibility, and invite them to participate in the study. If the HoH agreed, a baseline interview was scheduled.

We experienced some delays in receiving consents to contacts in both cohorts, resulting in either missing some families or having baseline interviews later than the ideal window of connection (within 2 months). Once we receive the Washington State ICDB data, we will be able to examine how well our sample represents the complete population of families who received assistance and the differences that need to be acknowledged. Preliminary comparisons of our data with coordinated entry data do not reveal any large differences in characteristics between the two data sources.

In Cohort 1, as noted, we attempted to recruit approximately 150 families from each county. Seventy-eight percent of the families across the three counties (N = 467) who consented to be contacted by Westat staff were eligible and completed a baseline interview. The remaining 21 percent did not participate because either they were unreachable (11%), they declined participation (5%), or our recruitment ended before a baseline interview was conducted (5%).

In Cohort 2, 67 percent of families (N=504) who consented to be contacted by Westat staff were eligible and completed a baseline interview. The remaining 33 percent did not participate because either they were unreachable (26%), they declined participation (6%), or recruitment had ended (1%). The lower response rate in Cohort 2 may be attributed to the fact that the systems had changed such that fewer families were in shelter at the time of the baseline interview (and thus were less easy to contact) and more families were searching for housing.

Data Collection: In both cohorts, families participated in an in-depth standardized baseline interview and up to three follow-up interviews. All interviews were conducted by trained interviewers in person with the HoH at a venue of the HoH's choosing that was convenient to the family, as long as it provided a private setting and was away from the children. When needed, we compensated the HoH for transportation and provided for childcare.

The baseline interviews were to be scheduled as soon as possible following a family's entry into shelter or a housing program. The timing of the baseline interviews averaged 41 days for Cohort 1 and 70 days for Cohort 2. If the baseline interview could not be conducted prior to six months, a six-month interview was conducted with the addition of key questions from the baseline.

We collected data from the head of household (HoH) or, if there was more than one adult in the family, the person who was most knowledgeable about all family members, typically the mother. We collected some basic descriptive information on all family members and more detailed information on one child, selected at random from among children between 2 and 18 living with the respondent at the time of selection. The selection strategy gave preference to a school-aged child if one was present in the household.

The baseline interview focused on demographics, family composition and service needs, and residential history; income, education, and employment history; access to services, housing, and economic opportunities; the length of time to make these connections and the barriers that were experienced; and more detailed demographic, health, and school information on a target child in the family. In Cohort 2, questions were added to measure the extent to which families were being affected by changes in the system such as changes to coordinated entry and homeless assistance options. Follow-up interviews examined changes in family composition and service needs; residential history between interviews; income, education, and employment; access to services and to housing and economic supports; and changes in the target child's health and school activity (attendance and school moves). Key outcome variables are shown in Table B-1.

Table B-1. Family Impact Study Outcomes

Housing and Homeless Outcomes	
Exits from the system	% of families who exit (from diversion, RRH, shelter, TH) % exiting to PH, shared housing, PSH, or good situation # of nights to exit
Length of time homeless	# of nights homeless (i.e., shelter, TH, literally homeless)
Length of housing stability	# of nights in permanent housing
Stability – moves	# of moves overall # of moves while in housing/# of different PH situations
Returns to homelessness (only at 18 and 30 months)	% who return to homelessness (to shelter, TH, literal homelessness) # of nights to return
Returns to the system after exiting to permanent housing (only at 18 and 30 months)	% who return to homelessness (to shelter, TH, literal homelessness) # of nights to return
Employment and Other Service Outcomes	

Employment	% who are employed at certain time periods (e.g., 6 months, 18 months) % who are consistently employed across certain lengths of time
Income	Level of income at certain time periods (e.g., 6 months, 18 months)
Services (only at 18 and 30 months)	% of HoH that increase access to needed services % of children that increase access to needed services
Family Well-Being Outcomes	
Parent-child intactness	% of those separated from children that reunify % of those separated from children due to CPS that reunify
Child schooling (only at 18 and 30 months)	# of absences school continuity

RRH=rapid re-housing; TH=transitional housing; PH=permanent housing; PSH=permanent supportive housing; CPS=Child Protective Services

All families in Cohort 1 who completed a baseline interview were provided with a gift card for \$20 for the baseline and \$30 for follow-up interviews. Of those completing the baseline interview, 84 percent (N= 392) completed the six-month interview. (For future analyses, we have a response rate of at least 83% for each subsequent wave; 72% of families have all follow-up data and 92% have at least one follow-up). Table B-2 presents the retention rates for each wave of data collection.

Table B-2. Family Impact Study Sample Sizes and Retention Rates

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Total
Baseline sample	467	504	971
6-month sample	392 (84%)	370 (73%)	762 (78%)
12-month sample	389 (83%)	366 (72%)	755 (78%)
18-month sample	395 (85%)	416 (82%)	811 (84%)
% with one follow-up wave	432 (93%)	450 (89%)	882 (91%)
% with all follow-up waves	337 (72%)	307 (61%)	644 (66%)

Of Cohort 2 families who completed the baseline interview, 73 percent (N = 369) completed a six-month interview. Families received a \$30 gift card for completing the baseline and six-month interviews. In

order to increase our response rates we increased the amount of the gift card to \$50 for completing the 12- and 18-month interviews. (As seen in Table B-2, this increase as well as other efforts led to higher response rates for the 18- month sample.)

Retention: Interviewers were primarily responsible for tracking and retaining families, but received support from other Westat staff as needed. Many strategies were used to track and maintain contact with families, including:

- Devoting the last 10-15 minutes of each interview for contact information on where the family is staying, emergency contacts, family and friends in the area, employers, local providers, mailing address, aliases, nicknames, hospitals and other areas where services were sought, etc.;
- Obtaining consent from the family during the interview for agency tracking assistance (i.e., from DSHS);
- Providing monetary incentives for each completed interview;
- Having a toll-free telephone line that families could call at any time to update their contact information;
- Attempting to reach families by phone, text message, and emails;
- Sending letters with crisp \$1 bills;
- Contacting local providers who had served the families in the past for updated contact information;
- Sending field “trackers” to families’ last known addresses;
- Posting flyers in the community at service providers, grocery stores, laundromats, etc.;
- Mailing birthday cards/New Year’s cards to stay in touch (and also to receive bounce-backs on addresses);
- Providing a self-addressed ‘change of address’ post card at each interview;
- Providing giveaways (e.g., pens, water bottles, backpacks) with the study phone number;
- Conducting searches on Lexis Nexis;
- Establishing a study Facebook page and conducting Facebook searches (for families that consented); and
- Providing \$5 early bird bonuses—if participants responded to an email or phone request to schedule a meeting within 48 hours.

Analytic Approach for Potential Study Confounds and Artifacts

Attrition Analysis: We performed attrition analyses to determine if there are any significant differences in the characteristics of families who are included in the six-month sample and those who completed a baseline only. In these analyses, we examined cohort, respondent characteristics, and service needs and housing barriers at baseline (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, criminal justice involvement). These attrition analyses revealed that there were a few key respondent differences between the six-month sample and the baseline population. Multivariate logistic regression analyses indicated that families in Cohort 2 were less likely than families in Cohort 1 to have completed a six-month interview. Families in

Snohomish County were more likely than families in King County to have completed a six-month interview. HoHs with a mental health hospitalization were more likely to have completed a six-month interview than those without one. No other variables significantly predicted six-month interview completion.

Examining and Controlling Non-Equivalence of Cohorts: As indicated in Tables 2-6 in the body of the report, although the baseline samples for the two cohorts are largely similar to one another, they do differ on a few characteristics. Families in Cohort 2 are significantly more likely to be older and Hispanic, less likely to have children under two years old, more likely to have higher education and be employed at entry as well as to have higher income and higher debt, and more likely to have more recent experiences with homelessness. We believe the non-equivalence is likely due in part to system changes that tightened the eligibility of the system to literally homeless families and due in part to changes in the strength of the economic climate. To address this non-equivalence of the groups, we constructed propensity score weights (Freedman & Berk, 2008). Propensity score weighting is a statistical technique to control for any selection biases in non-experimental studies. A propensity score is the conditional probability of being in the intervention group (Cohort 2 for this evaluation), based on a set of characteristic and background variables (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). In this study, we created propensity scores for members of each cohort using the characteristics that differed significantly across cohorts and were significantly associated with the outcome variables. We did one set of propensity scores for the families in the overall baseline sample when we compare just on baseline data and then another set for all families with six-month data. (We will develop propensity scores for the more complete study sample once the 18-month data collection is completed.) The scores were used to weight the probability that families in Cohort 1 would have been included in Cohort 2. To calculate these weights, we used grand mean imputation to address missingness on the relevant variables. [Grand mean imputation is replacing a missing value on a variable (such as age) with the mean for that total sample. Imputation is a standard procedures when few data are missing to provide for more complete samples for analyses, such as propensity score development]. Less than 5 percent of the data were missing for a given variable.

Table B-3 presents the statistical differences across the baseline cohorts in the relevant covariates before and after weighting. Examination of the propensity scores by cohort indicates that although the propensity scores do not overlap to a large degree, the propensity score weighting nevertheless improves the balance of the covariates in the model. After using the propensity scores as weights, the cohorts did not differ significantly across the chosen covariates.

Table B-3: Statistical Tests for Covariates in the Baseline Sample Propensity Analysis (N=971)

Variable	Unweighted		Weighted	
	T-test	p	T-test	p
Age	-3.82	0.0001	0.34	0.7306
Female	-1.26	0.2094	-1.80	0.0725
White	-0.08	0.9387	1.42	0.1559
Multi-race	-1.04	0.2982	-0.75	0.4533

	Unweighted		Weighted	
Hispanic	2.24	0.0254	-1.95	0.0506
Family size	-2.49	0.0131	0.44	0.6634
Children under age 2	1.95	0.0519	1.45	0.1486
Child away	-0.54	0.5902	-1.17	0.2415
< HS education	3.07	0.0022	0.73	0.4676
Employed at entry	-5.90	<.0001	-1.23	0.2185
Monthly income	-1.95	0.0509	0.07	0.9454
Family receives SSI/SSDI	-4.01	<.0001	0.20	0.8387
Poor physical health	-1.16	0.2468	0.72	0.4709
Has medical insurance	-7.21	<.0001	0.08	0.9382
Any mental health indicator	-2.64	0.0084	-0.64	0.5239
Hospitalized for mental health	-0.63	0.5279	-0.24	0.8115
Recent domestic violence	0.47	0.6355	-0.04	0.9710
Homeless ever	-0.79	0.4320	-1.24	0.2137
Homeless last 365 days	-14.33	<.0001	-0.47	0.6414
Own place last 365 days	1.07	0.2829	0.96	0.3376
Doubled up – last place stayed	10.80	<.0001	0.01	0.9934
Streets – last place stayed	-7.41	<.0001	1.55	0.1226
Shelter – last place stayed	-10.46	<.0001	-1.32	0.1882
Own place – last place stayed	2.61	0.0091	0.29	0.7714
Transitional housing – last place stayed	-2.46	0.0141	0.49	0.6270
Other – last place stayed	2.15	0.0318	-0.43	0.6676

Table B-4 presents the statistical differences between the six-month samples. The propensity weighting improved the balance for all covariates in the model, except gender of the HoH (p=0.0497) and whether the family stayed in their own place in the year before receipt of initial homeless assistance (p=0.0030).

Table B-4: Statistical Tests for Covariates in the Six-Month Sample Propensity Analysis (761)

Variable	Unweighted		Weighted	
	T-test	p	T-test	p
Age	-3.37	0.0008	0.05	0.9622
Female	-0.72	0.4712	-1.96	0.0497
White	-0.52	0.6004	1.79	0.0735
Multi-race	-0.76	0.4468	-0.02	0.9826
Hispanic	1.30	0.1946	-1.45	0.1469
Family size	-2.20	0.0283	0.36	0.7200
Children under age 2	2.50	0.0127	1.37	0.1704
Child away	-0.06	0.9486	1.18	0.2380
< HS education	2.61	0.0092	-0.14	0.8913
Employed at entry	-5.46	<.0001	0.21	0.8372
Monthly income	-2.02	0.0440	-0.05	0.9562
Family receives SSI/SSDI	-3.90	0.0001	-0.62	0.5346
Poor physical health	-1.11	0.2686	0.72	0.4712
Has medical insurance	-7.24	<.0001	-0.05	0.9589
Any mental health indicator	-2.57	0.0104	-0.46	0.6450
Hospitalized for mental health	-1.24	0.2137	-0.43	0.6641

	Unweighted		Weighted	
Recent domestic violence	0.52	0.6063	0.68	0.4950
Homeless ever	-1.43	0.1541	-1.74	0.0815
Homeless last 365 days	-13.05	<.0001	0.13	0.8950
Own place last 365 days	0.540	0.5919	2.98	0.0030
Doubled up – last place stayed	9.43	<.0001	-0.50	0.6170
Streets – last place stayed	-6.67	<.0001	1.94	0.0528
Shelter – last place stayed	-8.70	<.0001	-1.63	0.1044
Own place – last place stayed	2.51	0.0122	-0.49	0.6245
Transitional housing – last place stayed	-2.30	0.0217	0.20	0.8429
Other – last place stayed	1.29	0.1974	-0.48	0.6342

Addressing Missing Values: With the exception of two variables (time to entry and reports of recent domestic violence) , rates of missingness for all of the independent and dependent variables in the analyses were less than 5 percent for any given variable and were comparable across the cohorts. The measure of time to entry into the system and reports of recent experiences of domestic violence in the past 3 months have rates of missing of 5.7 percent each. The multivariate models presented here use list-wise deletion, meaning that they exclude from the analysis any case with missing data on any of the covariates included in the model. We are currently exploring various methods of imputation in order to verify that findings are not attributable to systematic missingness and to increase the statistical power of the outcome analyses.

Analytic Approach for the Study Findings

Descriptive and Bivariate Analysis: Descriptive analyses (frequencies, histograms, examination of the shapes of the distribution and variability) were conducted to examine the distribution of predictor and outcome variables of interest. Bivariate analyses (statistical analyses that examine the relationship between two variables) were used to explore the relationship between cohort and different background variables to determine whether the families in the two cohorts differed with regards to sociodemographic characteristics, family composition, strengths and barriers, or housing or homeless history. Cross-tabulations and chi square analysis were used to compare cohorts with regard to dichotomous variables of interest (such as intactness). Independent samples t-tests were used to compare cohorts with regard to continuous variables (such as age). All cohort comparisons were conducted first as unweighted analyses and then applying propensity weights. In cases where variables were not normally distributed, nonparametric tests (McNemar’s test) were used. Bivariate analyses (using paired sample t-tests) were also used to examine whether interval level outcomes (such as days homeless) changed significantly over time within each cohort. We also examined these bivariate relationships within county; results are presented in Appendix E.

Multivariate Analysis: A series of weighted linear and logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine whether being in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1 (receiving homeless assistance after systems

reform compared to before systems reform) predicted outcomes over the six-month follow-up period. Propensity scores were applied as weights to the models to address cohort differences. Linear regression analyses were conducted to examine whether cohort predicted the following continuous outcomes: (1) days in permanent housing, (2) days homeless, (3) weeks from first formal help seeking to program entry, and (4) income at six-month wave.

We also conducted a survival analysis of days to permanent housing over the six-month follow-up to understand if families in Cohort 2 entered permanent housing faster than families in Cohort 1.

Binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine whether cohort predicted the following dichotomous outcomes: (1) employment at six months, (2) parent-child intactness at six-month wave, (3) children's chronic absenteeism, and (4) whether children changed schools due to a move. Because the distribution of days in own place was heavily weighted with 0s (many people did not spend any days in own place), we additionally conducted binary logistic regression analysis predicting any days in own place over the six-month follow-up period. We also re-categorized days in own place as an ordinal outcome and conducted ordinal logistic regression analysis to address this question. Because cohort effects were consistent across analyses, we present the results of the linear model.

Multivariate logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine differences in the characteristics of families assigned to different types of assistance in Cohort 2.

In addition to cohort, all multivariate models include relevant covariates, including sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, race and ethnicity); family composition (e.g., number of children, presence of a spouse/partner, whether any children are away); education, employment, and income; as well as measures of strengths and vulnerabilities (e.g., felony conviction, recent domestic violence, homeless history, and indicators of mental health). Multivariate models predicting children's school attendance and stability include sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender); health measures (e.g., very good or excellent health, presence of a special need); and previous schooling attendance and stability measures. Additionally, all of the analyses included county; differences between the counties on the outcomes of interest are noted in footnotes to the models.

When conducting multiple statistical analyses, the probability of observing a false positive increases. In order to reduce the number of false positives we report, we used a false discovery rate (FDR), a statistical correction used to set a higher threshold for statistical significance.

Study Limitations and Strengths

There are several key limitations to the findings as well as some important strengths to our design that need to be considered. The non-equivalence between the two cohorts, though balanced for the analyses through propensity score weights and further controlled with covariates, always allows the possibility that hidden or unmeasured biases exist that account for the difference in outcomes. Families are more likely to be employed, have more education, and have higher incomes in Cohort 2 than Cohort 1, but also to have experienced more recent homelessness. It is plausible that they are more able to access and stay in housing due to their enhanced social capital. These variables do relate to their ability to achieve housing, but still do not eliminate the independent effects of cohort. Given the fact that the context tightened considerably between the two cohort time periods, the ability to access housing should have been more difficult, making the added human capital less powerful given the increases in costs of housing.

The nature of the context changed dramatically over the course of the study and continues to change. We attempted to include measures of the context in the models to control on the influences in the economic climate on outcomes. However, because these changes have been highly linear, they correlate almost perfectly with our cohorts. To try to have an understanding of the role of context on a family's ability to exit homelessness, we examined whether quarterly vacancy rate (i.e., the quarterly vacancy rate at the time of a family's receipt of initial assistance) was related to number of nights in housing and number of nights homeless in the six-month period. Quarterly vacancy rate did not relate to either of these variables. Moreover, the six-month findings on permanent housing access (with an increase in Cohort 2 compared to Cohort 1) suggest that changes are occurring despite the tightened housing market, and that if the context is affecting families' housing outcomes, the change between the cohorts would likely be even greater if the market for Cohort 2 had remained comparable to the market for Cohort 1.

In addition, the reforms occurring under the Family Homeless Systems Initiative in the three counties were not occurring in a vacuum, but rather contemporaneously with other policy changes occurring at the state and federal level. The design and intent of the evaluation was to understand the role that the Initiative played in fostering reform, not to attribute the findings to it. Our qualitative analysis of the systems changes in the three communities, particularly in comparison to the contrast communities, should provide a lens for understanding the contribution of the Initiative to the changes that occurred. This report will be developed in 2019.

The study is also only a partial test of the system. We only included families who received some type of assistance from a homeless service provider in each cohort. We could not track families in Cohort 1 who were turned away because there was not capacity in the shelters, nor could we track families in Cohort 2 who went through coordinated entry in each county but who may not have been able to receive assistance. The samples are comparable between the cohorts, but we cannot generalize the findings of the study to families who were not successful in receiving assistance.

Additionally, the data included here are self-reported by families, not independently verified (with the exception of date of receipt of initial homeless assistance, which was verified by providers). As a result, they are subject to errors in recall. We ask families to report when they first sought assistance and the number of calls made. These data may differ from that which is recorded in the counties' coordinated entry data systems. Future analyses will include coordinated entry and Homeless Management Information System data and will provide independently verified data to substantiate differences between the cohorts.

As a mixed-methods longitudinal study, our study has some strengths in our ability to explain outcomes and changes, even if we are not able to control them. We have considerable qualitative data on how the systems change over time and are able to consider the outcome changes within this context. We also have data from the state's Integrated Client Database (forthcoming) that will allow us to do the following:

- Construct a comparison group for each cohort so that we can look at changes in the balance of the state and see whether there are similar secular trends in the population across the state (especially more urban areas);
- Add additional data to the cohorts we have to amplify data on foster care, criminal justice involvement, and service receipt; and
- Examine the more complete population receiving homeless services across the study timeframe (2010 to 2018) to learn:
 - The extent to which our sample is representative of the more complete population entering the system during each cohort recruitment period;
 - How the population might vary over time in demographics and background; and
 - Changes in the volume of families served through the system over time, the length of time families receive assistance, exit designations, and returns.

Appendix C. Systems Innovations Grants, 2010-2017

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
King County								
<i>Coordinated entry</i>	-	\$1,500,000	-	-	-	\$1,677,680	-	\$3,177,680
<i>Diversion/ Prevention</i>	-	\$100,000	-	\$1,160,000	\$400,000	\$210,000	-	\$1,870,000
<i>Rapid re-housing</i>	-	\$200,000	\$2,200,000	-	\$800,000	-	-	\$3,200,000
<i>Economic opportunity</i>	-	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$461,250	-	\$471,250
<i>Tailored services</i>	-	\$80,000	-	-	\$280,000	-	-	\$360,000
<i>County total</i>	-	\$1,880,000	\$2,200,000	\$1,160,000	\$1,490,000	\$2,348,930	-	\$9,078,930
Pierce County								
<i>Coordinated entry</i>	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,774,796	\$202,960	\$1,977,756
<i>Diversion/ Prevention</i>	\$535,883	\$68,000	-	\$400,000	-	\$288,805	\$623,328	\$1,916,016
<i>Rapid re-housing</i>	-	-	-	-	\$400,000	\$190,438	\$153,505	\$743,943
<i>Economic opportunity</i>	-	-	\$1,425,076	\$687,095	-	-	-	\$2,112,171
<i>Tailored services</i>	-	-	\$360,000	-	-	-	-	\$360,000
<i>County total</i>	\$535,883	\$68,000	\$1,785,076	\$1,087,095	\$400,000	\$2,254,039	\$979,793	\$7,109,886
Snohomish County								
<i>Coordinated entry</i>	\$20,000	-	\$255,210	-	\$924,328	\$350,000	-	\$1,549,538
<i>Diversion/ Prevention</i>	-	\$32,040	-	\$136,400	\$670,130	-	-	\$838,570
<i>Rapid re-housing</i>	-	\$62,040	\$150,000	\$1,127,000	\$286,000	-	-	\$1,625,040
<i>Economic opportunity</i>	\$98,400	-	\$565,299	\$34,000	\$527,842	\$225,000	-	\$1,450,541
<i>Tailored services</i>	\$469,954	\$457,900	\$305,000	-	-	\$400,000	\$587,815	\$2,220,669
<i>County total</i>	\$588,354	\$551,980	\$1,275,509	\$1,297,400	\$2,408,300	\$975,000	\$587,815	\$7,684,358

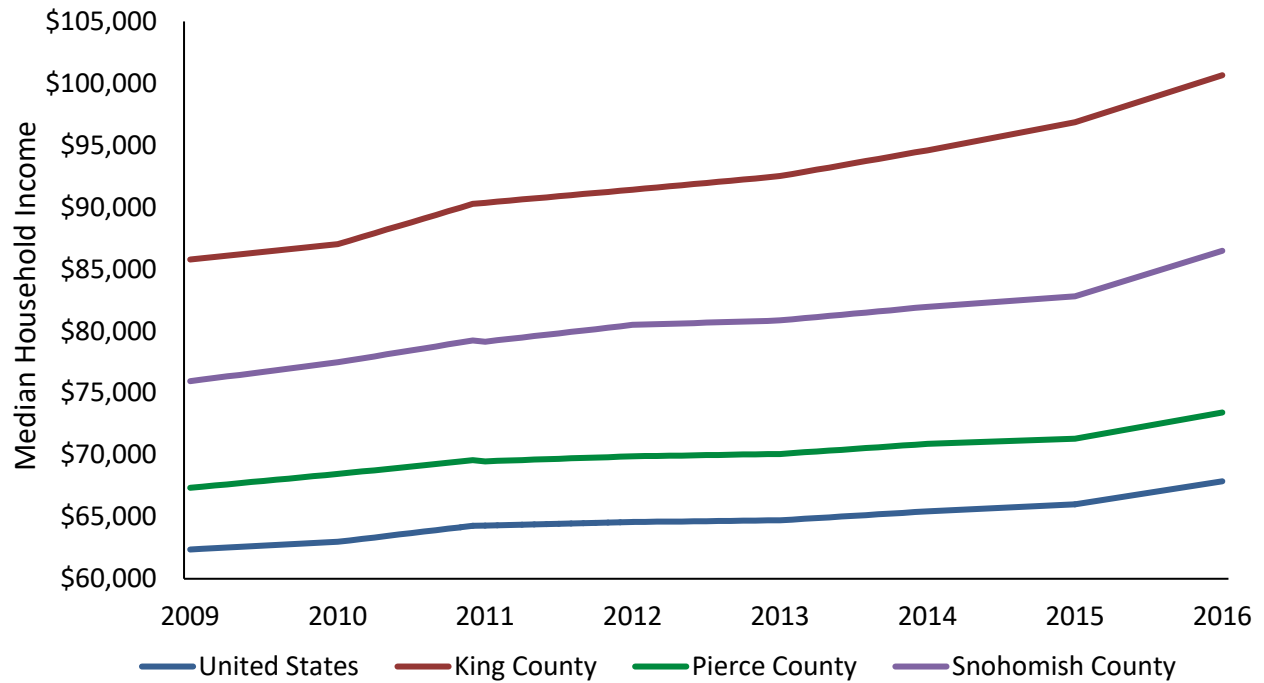
Year	Grant Name	Amount	Length	Focus
King County				
2012	Seattle Prevention (with ECEAP)	\$100,000	2.5 years	Prevention
	Career Connections	\$80,000	3 years	Tailored services
	Family Housing Connection	\$1,500,000	3 years	Coordinated entry
	Rapid Re-housing/Diversion	\$200,000	3.25 years	Rapid re-housing
2013	KC Capacity Building Grants (Multiple providers)	\$620,000	2.75-4 years	Rapid re-housing
	RRH Employment Navigator (Multiple providers)	\$800,000	2-2.5 years	Rapid re-housing; Economic opportunities
	RRH Pilot (Multiple providers)	\$780,000	2-2.5 years	Rapid re-housing
2014	FHC Shelter Diversion (Multiple providers)	\$1,160,000	2 years	Prevention
2015	KC Shelter to Housing Grants (Multiple providers)	\$372,000	2-2.5 years	Rapid re-housing
	Risk Mitigation Fund	\$428,000	2 years	Rapid re-housing
	Kids Plus Pilot Project	\$280,000	2 years	Tailored services
	Immigrant and Refugee Prevention Navigator (Multiple providers)	\$400,000	2 years	Prevention
	YouthCare One Time Grant	\$10,000	One time	
2016	Family Housing Connection Transition	\$335,492	6 months	Coordinated entry
	Front Door Employment Services (Multiple providers)	\$461,250	2-2.25 years	Economic opportunities
	Coordinated Entry – Regional Access Points	\$832,508	2 years	Coordinated entry
	King County Data Driven Culture Initiative	\$509,680	2 years	Coordinated entry; Rapid re-housing; Tailored services; Economic opportunities; Prevention
	Domestic Violence Housing First	\$210,000	3 years	Prevention
2018	Rapid Re-housing Expansion – Interim CDA	\$500,000	2 years	Rapid re-housing
	Legal Assistance for Housing Debt	\$411,210	2 years	Rapid re-housing
	Rapid Re-housing Expansion – SIHB	\$500,000	2 years	Rapid re-housing

Year	Grant Name	Amount	Length	Focus
Pierce County				
2011	Centralized Intake & Homelessness Prevention Services	\$255,000	2 years	Prevention; Coordinated Entry;
	McCarver Elementary	\$280,883	3.5 years	Prevention; Rapid Re-housing; Tailored Services
2012	Landlord Liaison Project	\$68,000	1 year	Prevention
2013	Sector Training Navigation	\$360,000	2 years	Economic Opportunities
	McKinney Vento Workforce Project	\$512,076	6 months-2 years	Economic Opportunities; Tailored Services
	Civic Legal Aid for Homeless Families	\$360,000	3 years	Tailored Services
	Community & Technical College Navigator (Education to Employment)	\$553,000	2.25 years	Economic Opportunities
2014	LEAP	\$687,095	2-2.5 years	Economic Opportunities
	Diversion Collaboration	\$400,000	2 years	Prevention; Coordinated Entry
2015	PC High Performing System Grants (Multiple providers)	\$50,000	1.25 years	Rapid Re-housing
	PC Transitional Housing Conversion Project - Phase I	\$50,000	6 months	Rapid Re-housing
2016	From Centralized Intake to Coordinated Entry	\$1,092,986	2 years	Coordinated Entry
	Pierce County Data Driven Culture	\$288,805	3 years	Rapid Re-housing; Tailored Services; Economic Opportunities; Coordinated Entry; Prevention
	Transitional Housing Conversion - Phase II	\$71,474	6 months	Rapid Re-housing
	PC Transitional Housing Project Phase II	\$118,964	9 months	Rapid Re-housing
	Housing Crisis Support for Pregnant and Post-Partum Families	\$681,810	3 years	Tailored Services; Coordinated Entry
2017	PC Transitional Housing Project Phase II	\$105,395	7 months	Rapid Re-housing
	Pacific Courtyard Conversion	\$48,110	9 months	Rapid Re-housing
	2-1-1 and Diversion	\$623,328	2 years	Prevention
	Expanding Coordinated Entry to Family Shelters	\$202,960	2 years	Coordinated entry

Year	Grant Name	Amount	Length	Focus
Snohomish County				
2011	Integrated Economic Opportunity & Housing Services Navigator	\$22,400	1.25 years	Economic opportunities
	Investing in Families: Family/Civil Law Services	\$9,834	1 year	Tailored services
	Investing in Families: Coordinated Entry	\$20,000	1 year	Coordinated entry
	Flex Fund	\$369,600	4 years	Tailored services
	Investing in Families: Mental Health Access	\$60,091	1.5 years	Tailored services
	Investing in Families: Family/Civil Law Services	\$30,429	1 year	Tailored services
	CATCH	\$76,000	2 years	Economic opportunities
2012	Investing in Families: Prevention	\$32,040	1 year	Prevention;
	Integrated Services for FUP Holders	\$30,000	1 year	Rapid re-housing; Tailored services
	Investing in Families: Rapid Re-housing	\$32,040	1 year	Rapid re-housing
	Mental Health & Chemical Dependency System Integration	\$68,134	2 years	Tailored services; Coordinated entry
	Data Integration	\$65,000	2 years	Tailored services
	Coordinated Entry Navigator	\$324,766	2-3.5 years	Tailored services; Coordinated entry
2013	North Snohomish County Coordinated Entry Navigator	\$150,000	2 years	Coordinated entry
	Housing Resource Specialist	\$150,000	3.5 years	Rapid re-housing
	Assertive Engagement Specialist	\$125,000	3.5 years	Tailored services
	South Snohomish County Coordinated Entry Navigator	\$105,210	2 years	Coordinated entry
	Employment Readiness Navigator (for Housing Programs)	\$120,000	2 years	Economic opportunities
	Life Skills Project	\$80,000	2 years	Tailored services

Year	Grant Name	Amount	Length	Focus
	College Readiness & Job Retention Services	\$100,000	2 years	Economic opportunities
	Employment Readiness Navigator & Training Fund	\$345,299	3.25 years	Economic opportunities
	Finance-Related Assistance & Education	\$100,000	1 year	Tailored services
2014	Interfaith Shelter Diversion	\$136,400	2 years	Prevention
	Enhanced Econ Opp & RRH Services	\$777,000	2.5 years	Rapid re-housing; Economic opportunities
	Mobile Advocate & DVS-based Navigator	\$350,000	2.5 years	Rapid re-housing
	School-Based Navigators	\$34,000	2 years	Economic opportunities
2015	Prevention Pilot Project	\$500,000	2.5 years	Prevention
	Landlord Engagement Project	\$286,000	2.75 years	Rapid re-housing; Tailored services
	Financial and Legal Assistance and Education Program	\$324,500	2 years	Economic opportunities
	Housing Retention Support Project	\$170,130	2 years	Prevention; Rapid re-housing
	Rural Outreach and Coordinated Entry	\$298,678	3 years	Coordinated entry
	Homeless Young Parent Outreach and Coordinated Entry Project	\$625,650	3 years	Prevention; Coordinated entry
	Supported Employment Pilot	\$203,342	2 years	Economic opportunities
2016	Veteran Families – Actual Zero Homeless Initiative	\$400,000	3 years	Tailored services; Coordinated entry
	Snohomish County Data Driven Culture	\$350,000	3 years	Rapid re-housing; Tailored services; Economic opportunities; Coordinated entry; Prevention
	Rapid Re-Employment	\$225,000	3 years	Economic opportunities
2017	Health & Housing	\$587,815	2 years	Tailored services; Coordinated entry

Appendix D. Median Household Income by County



Appendix E. Families' Characteristics, Experiences, and Outcomes by County

Table E-1. Family Impact Study Sample Sizes

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Baseline sample	467	504	156	182	157	157	154	165
6-month sample % of baseline	392 (84%)	370 (73%)	133 (85%)	117 (64%)	127 (81%)	117 (75%)	132 (86%)	135 (82%)

Table E-2. Demographic Characteristics of the HoHs of Families in Each Cohort

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Cohort 1 (N=156)	Cohort 2 (N=182)	Cohort 1 (N=157)	Cohort 2 (N=157)	Cohort 1 (N=154)	Cohort 2 (N=165)
Female	89%	92%	89%	86%	84%	94%*	95%	95%
Age	32	34***	32	35*	33	32	31	35***
Hispanic	16%	11%*	22%	13%	12%	10%	15%	11%
Race								
White	42%	43%	25%	24%	47%	40%	56%	65%
Black	26%	26%	36%	41%	28%	26%	13%	10%
Asian	2%	1%	5%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
American Indian	3%	4%	2%	6%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Pacific Islander	3%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%	2%	2%
Other race	6%	4%	12%	4%*	2%	3%	6%	5%
Multiracial	17%	19%	18%	21%	12%	24%*	20%	13%
Born in USA	87%	91%	77%	88%*	93%	95%	93%	90%
Lived in WA 5+ years	44%	83%***	41%	83%**	50%	78%**	42%	88%***
Lived in county 5+ year	--	70%	--	76%	--	64%	--	68%
Served in Armed Forces	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-3. Composition of Families in Each Cohort

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Cohort 1 (N=156)	Cohort 2 (N=182)	Cohort 1 (N=157)	Cohort 2 (N=157)	Cohort 1 (N=154)	Cohort 2 (N=165)
# children under 19	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.7
Spouse/partner	25%	27%	24%	23%	34%	32%	17%	27%
Children under 2	43%	37%	44%	34%	32%	42%	53%	35%**
Currently pregnant	11%	9%	10%	7%	17%	12%	8%	7%
Child away	23%	25%	15%	20%	26%	22%	29%	32%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-4. Strengths and Vulnerabilities of HoHs of Families in Each Cohort

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Cohort 1 (N=156)	Cohort 2 (N=182)	Cohort 1 (N=157)	Cohort 2 (N=157)	Cohort 1 (N=154)	Cohort 2 (N=165)
< HS education	29%	20%**	24%	19%	24%	17%	38%	24%*
HS education/GED	33%	32%	27%	31%	39%	32%	31%	32%
Some College	39%	49%**	49%	51%	36%	51%*	31%	45%*
Ever employed	96%	98%	95%	100%*	96%	97%	97%	96%
Employed at entry	16%	32%***	26%	41%*	10%	27%***	12%	27%**
Median monthly income	\$478	\$745***	\$602	\$922**	\$453	\$700***	\$408	\$657***
Receives SSI/SSDI (family)	10%	19%***	10%	17%	10%	22%*	10%	18%
Median total debt	\$3,471	\$6,760	\$3,790	\$6,660	\$3,175	\$5,860	\$3,200	\$8,245**
Has medical insurance	82%	96%***	69%	95%	85%	97%***	91%	97%
Poor physical health scale	10%	11%	11%	8%	14%	11%	4%	14%**
Any mental health indicator	47%	55%*	47%	59%	46%	48%	48%	58%
Mental health hospitalization	15%	17%	10%	17%	17%	14%	18%	18%
Substance abuse screen	25%	20%	17%	14%	27%	20%	31%	27%
Hospitalized for SA	21%	19%	7%	12%	21%	18%	34%	28%
Recent DV	9%	8%	8%	9%	10%	7%	10%	9%
History of DV	60%	60%	55%	59%	57%	54%	68%	69%
Convicted of a felony	17%	18%	11%	21%	25%	12%*	16%	19%
On probation or parole	7%	5%	6%	3%	5%	2%	8%	11%
Open CPS plan	9%	9%	4%	2%	12%	10%	11%	15%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-5. Employment Characteristics for HoHs' Jobs at Receipt of Initial Assistance

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=71)	Cohort 2 (N=132)	Cohort 1 (N=40)	Cohort 2 (N=73)	Cohort 1 (N=15)	Cohort 2 (N=42)	Cohort 1 (N=18)	Cohort 2 (N=44)
Hours per week	26	31**	27	33*	29	31	19	29*
Hourly wage	\$10.51	\$13.03**	\$10.82	\$13.14**	\$10.62	\$12.21	\$9.71	\$13.47***
Working multiple jobs	(N=60) 8%	(N=116) 9%	(N=34) 9%	(N=56) 11%	(N=12) 0%	(N=32) 9%	(N=14) 14%	(N=27) 7%
Job offers benefits	(N=71) 14%	(N=129) 47%***	(N=39) 15%	(N=59) 54%***	(N=15) 7%	(N=32) 47%*	(N=17) 18%	(N=38) 36%
Job type	(N=72)	(N=132)	(N=40)	(N=60)	(N=15)	(N=34)	(N=17)	(N=39)
Permanent	65%	74%	75%	78%	40%	68%	65%	71%
Temporary	24%	17%	13%	17%	60%	24%	18%	15%
Seasonal/Day labor	11%	8%	13%	5%	0%	9%	18%	13%
Job offers opportunity for advancement	(N=57) 56%	(N=130) 68%	(N=32) 53%	(N=59) 69%	(N=12) 75%	(N=33) 70%	(N=13) 46%	(N=37) 65%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-6. Homeless History of Families in Each Cohort

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Cohort 1 (N=156)	Cohort 2 (N=182)	Cohort 1 (N=157)	Cohort 2 (N=157)	Cohort 1 (N=154)	Cohort 2 (N=165)
Homeless Ever	44%	47%	36%	43%	44%	45%	53%	53%
Homeless as a Child	17%	14%	12%	11%	15%	15%	25%	18%
Homeless past 2 years	21%	25%	15%	23%	20%	20%	28%	31%
On lease in last 6m	42%	48%	47%	42%	43%	46%	37%	43%
Homeless last 6m	28%	64%***	23%	71%***	34%	57%***	28%	62%***
Homeless night before entry	13%	50%***	9%	59%***	18%	41%***	11%	48%***
Doubled up last 6m	74%	61%***	76%	57%***	71%	69%	75%	57%**
Own place last 6m	48%	41%*	51%	39%	53%	43%	40%	40%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-7. Characteristics of Target Children in Each Cohort at Baseline

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Older children								
	N=232	N=279	N=91	N=115	N=82	N=82	N=59	N=82
Female	55%	48%	52%	46%	60%	46%	53%	54%
Age	10.7	10.9	10.7	11.3	10.9	10.0	10.6	11.2
School type								
Elementary	56%	54%	56%	50%	57%	64%	58%	49%
Middle	24%	24%	26%	25%	23%	21%	20%	26%
High	20%	23%	18%	25%	20%	15%	22%	26%
Changed schools	26%	33%	24%	36%	27%	35%	26%	29%
Chronically absent	30%	22%	31%	28%	28%	21%	32%	16%
Excellent/very good health	74%	76%	67%	78%	79%	78%	78%	70%
Any special need	50%	50%	47%	51%	50%	46%	56%	52%
Young children								
	N=125	N=119	N=34	N=37	N=39	N=43	N=41	N=39
Female	48%	52%	43%	38%	57%	67%	43%	49%
Age	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.6
Enrolled in Preschool/ Pre-K	30%	45%	37%	53%	31%	42%	24%	41%
Changed schools	28%	25%	25%	40%	36%	6%	23%	31%
Early intervention assessment	21%	32%	12%	27%	19%	26%	30%	45%
Early intervention services	10%	19%	9%	14%	11%	17%	9%	26%
Excellent/very good health	81%	80%	85%	73%	78%	86%	81%	80%
Any special need	27%	32%	15%	24%	24%	26%	41%	46%

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table E-8. Formal Help Seeking

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=467)	Cohort 2 (N=504)	Cohort 1 (N=156)	Cohort 2 (N=182)	Cohort 1 (N=157)	Cohort 2 (N=157)	Cohort 1 (N=154)	Cohort 2 (N=165)
% contacted homeless system first	72%	76%	72%	84%*	75%	76%	69%	65%
% ever on waitlist	62%	75%**	65%	72%	62%	77%*	59%	77%**
% ever contacted 211	78%	85%*	84%	97%***	70%	68%	81%	90%
# calls seeking assistance								
Mean	98	73**	116	81*	92	58*	86	79
Median	40	30*	50	30**	40	25	30	40
Range	0-500+	0-500+	0-500	0-500	0-500	0-500	0-500	0-500
# organizations contacted								
Mean	11	9	14	10*	10	8	8	9
Median	6	5**	10	5***	6	4*	4	5
Range	0-99	0-100	0-99	1-100	0-80	0-80	0-50	0-100
# different assessments								
Mean	5	5	7	5	5	4	3	5
Median	2	3**	3	3	2	2	0	3**
Range	0-99	0-99	0-99	0-45	0-80	0-50	0-45	0-99
Time to entry (weeks) - Homeless System	(n=330)	(n=342)	(n=113)	(n=142)	(n=115)	(n=116)	(n=105)	(n=94)
Mean	25	38**	25	47**	17	20	35	45
Median	10	14*	9	20**	8	9	15	14
Range	0-500+	0-493	0-196	0-493	0-150	0-270	0-519	0-382

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Figure E-1A. Number of Weeks to Receive Assistance – King County

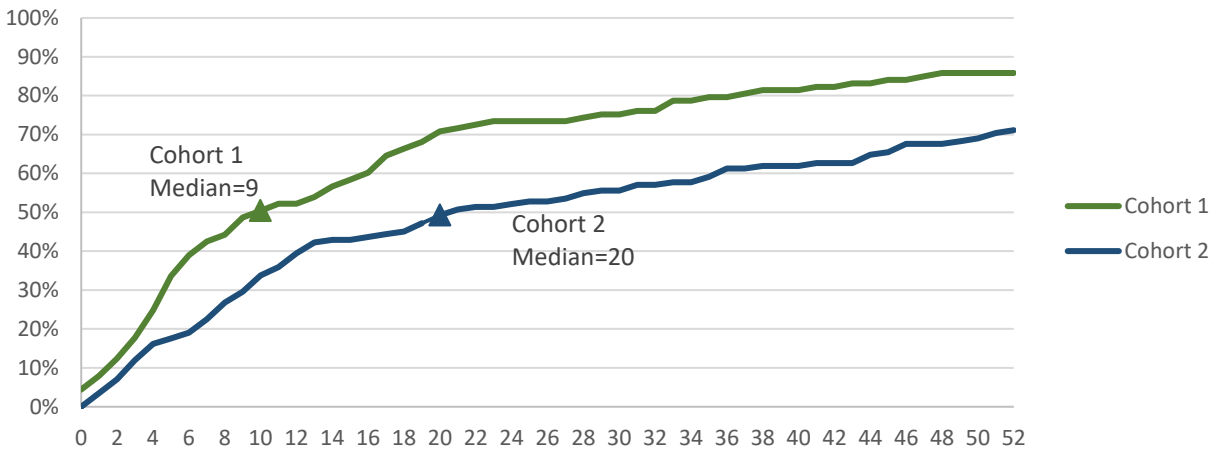


Figure E-1B. Number of Weeks to Receive Assistance – Pierce County

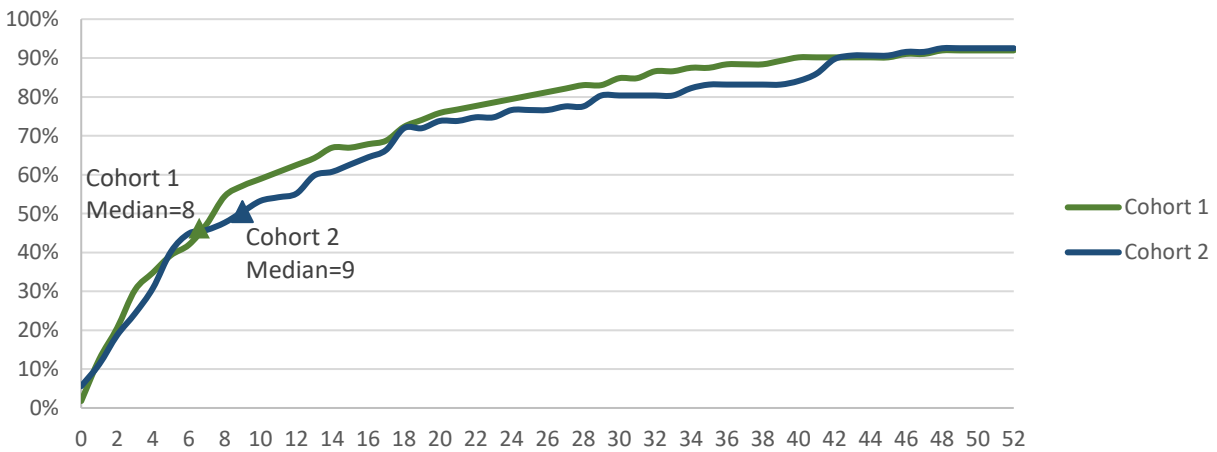


Figure E-1C. Number of Weeks to Receive Assistance – Snohomish County

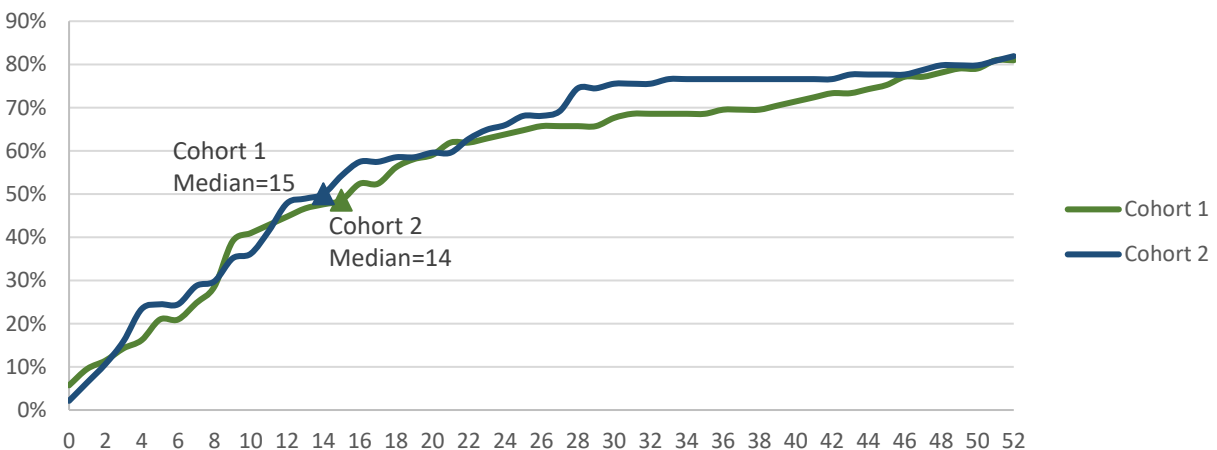


Figure E-2A. Initial Type of Homeless Assistance Received – King County

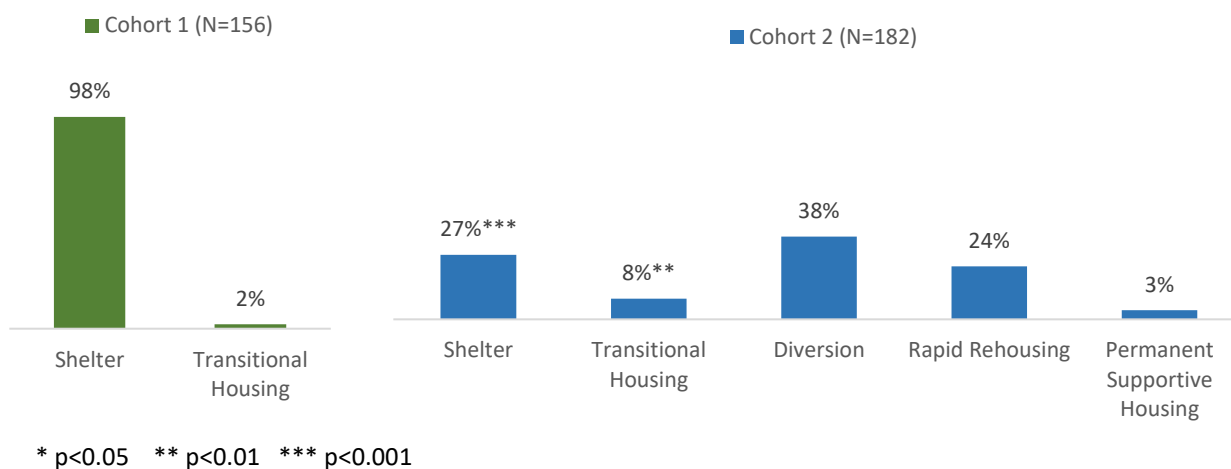


Figure E-2B. Initial Type of Homeless Assistance Received – Pierce County

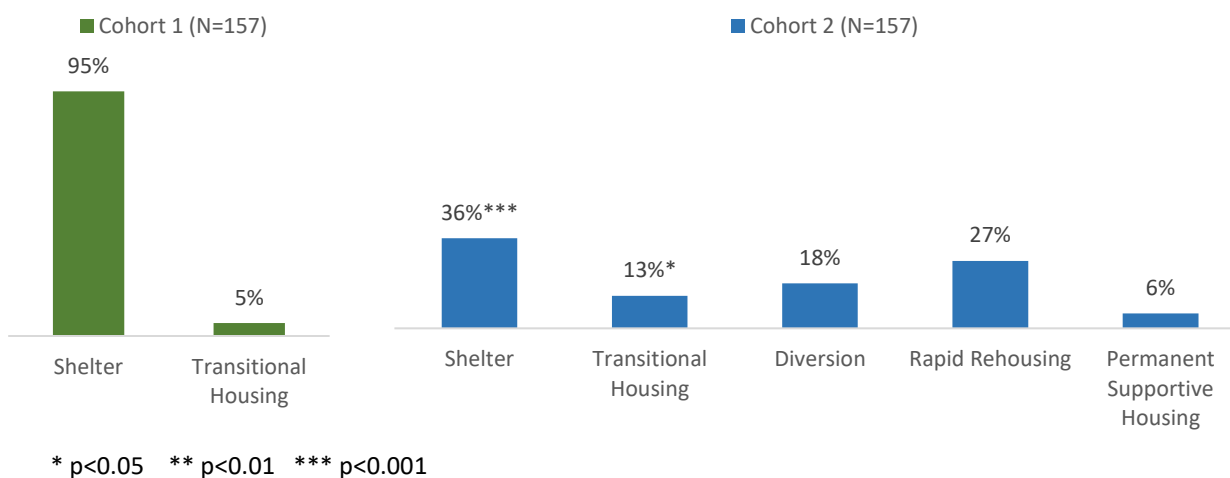


Figure E-2C. Initial Type of Homeless Assistance Received – Snohomish County

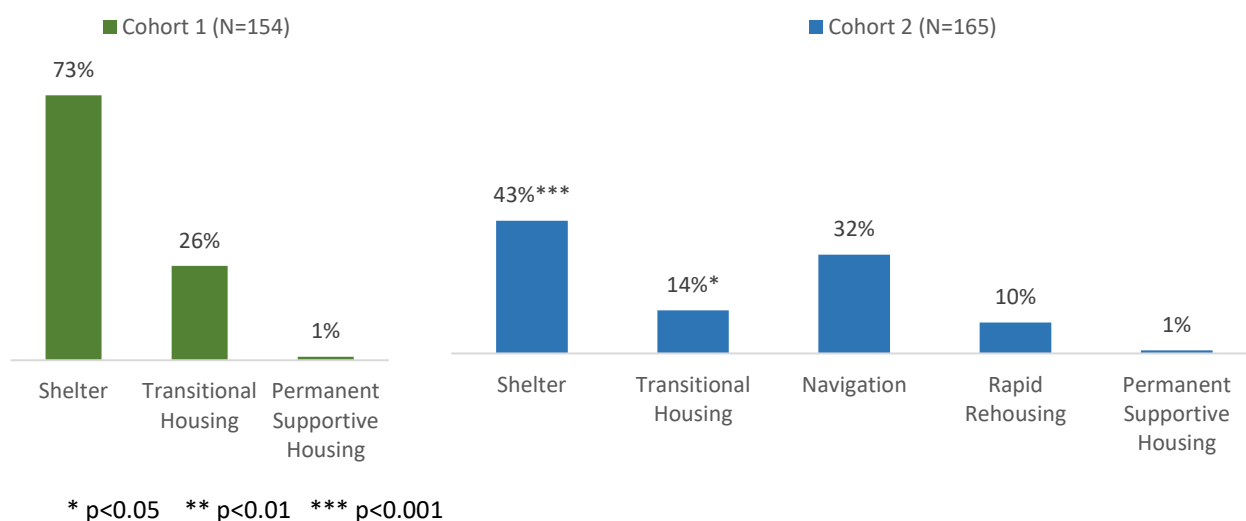


Figure E-3A. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received – King County

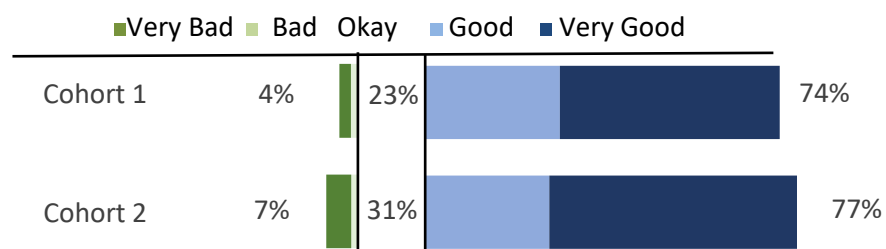


Figure E-3B. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received – Pierce County

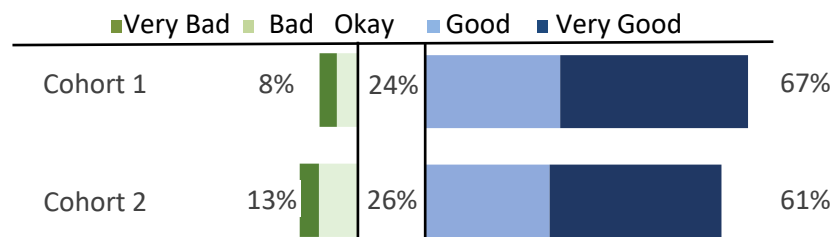


Figure E-3C. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received – Snohomish County

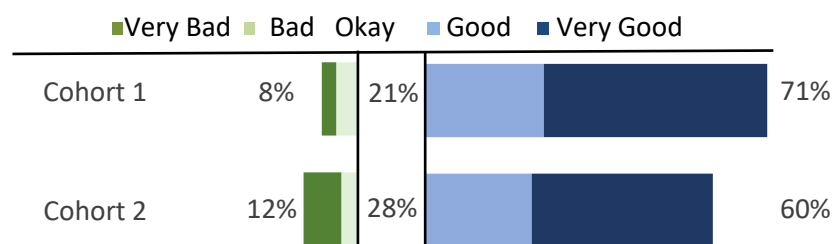


Figure E-4A. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received by Type for Cohort 2 – King County

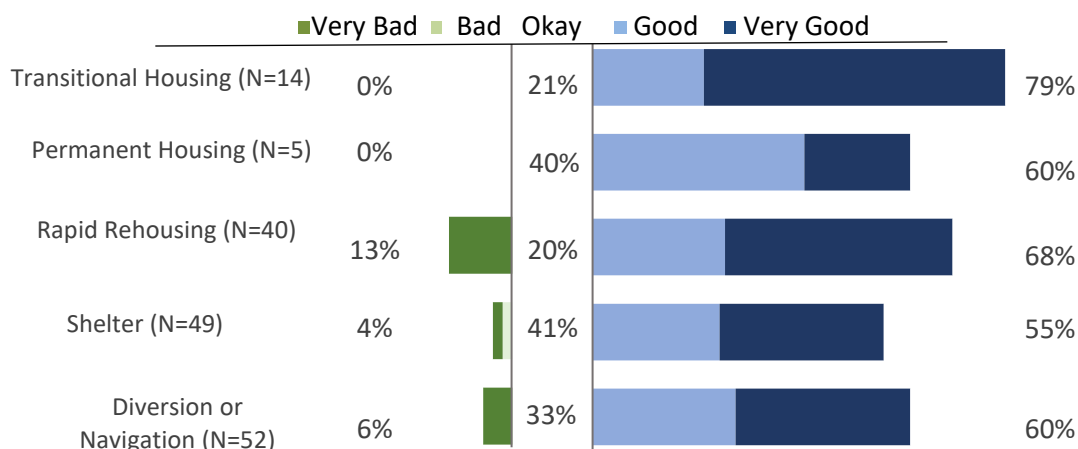


Figure E-4B. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received by Type for Cohort 2 – Pierce County

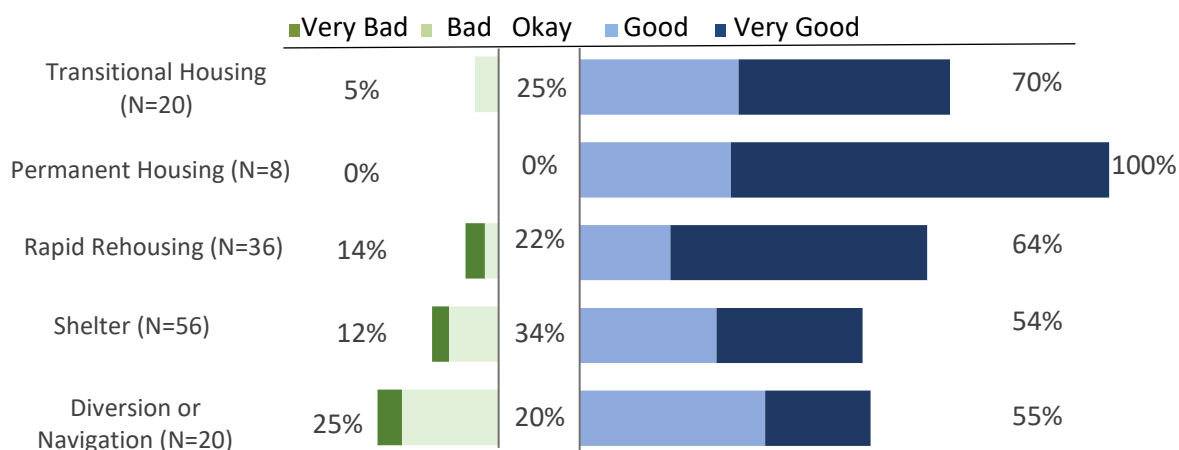


Figure E-4C. Fit of Type of Homeless Assistance Received by Type for Cohort 2 – Snohomish County

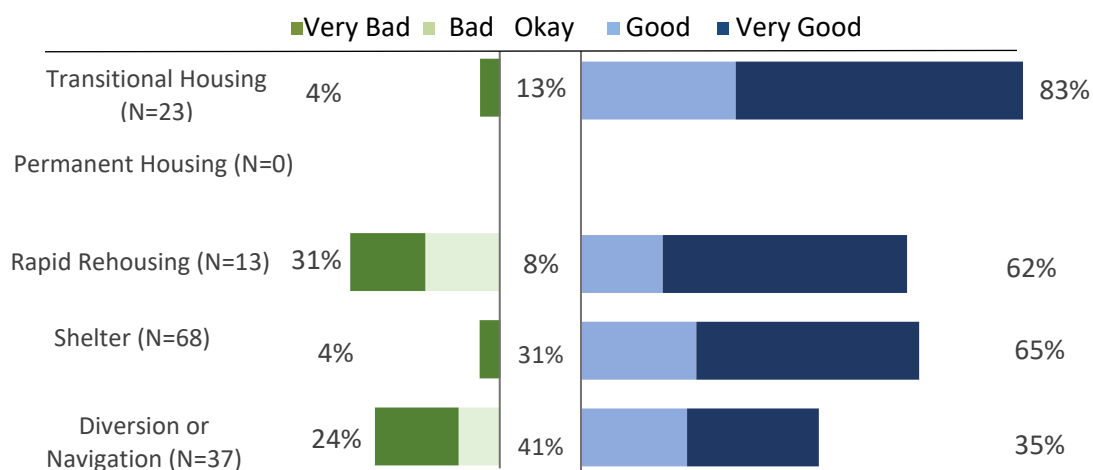
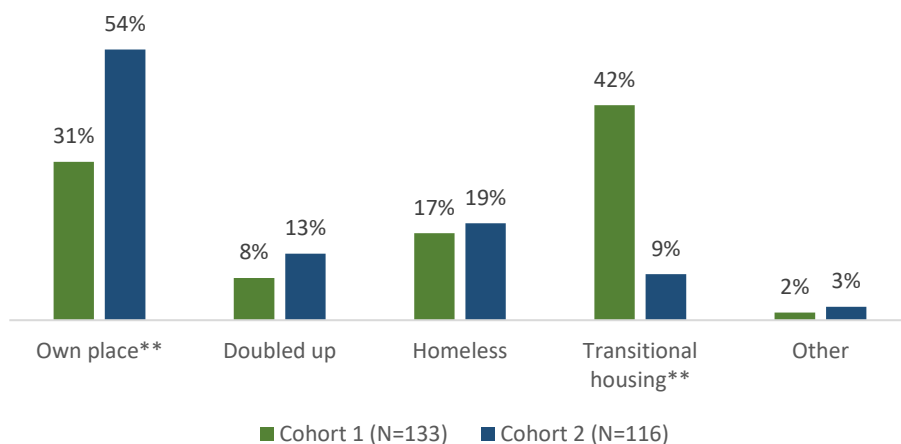
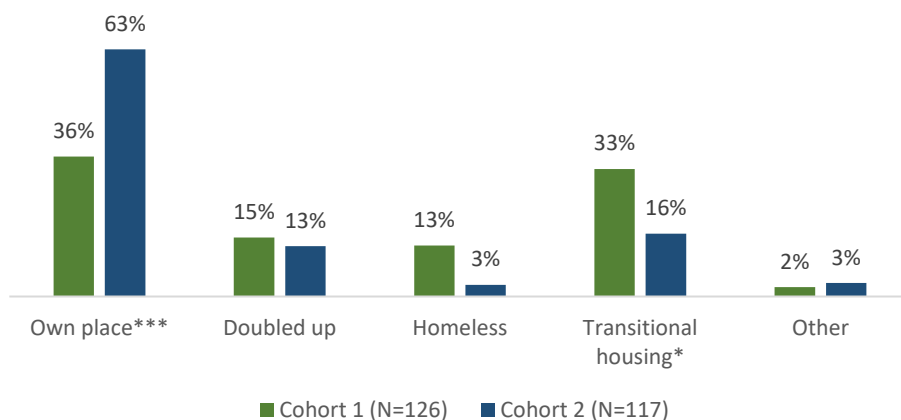


Figure E-5A. Where Families are Living Six Months after Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance – King County



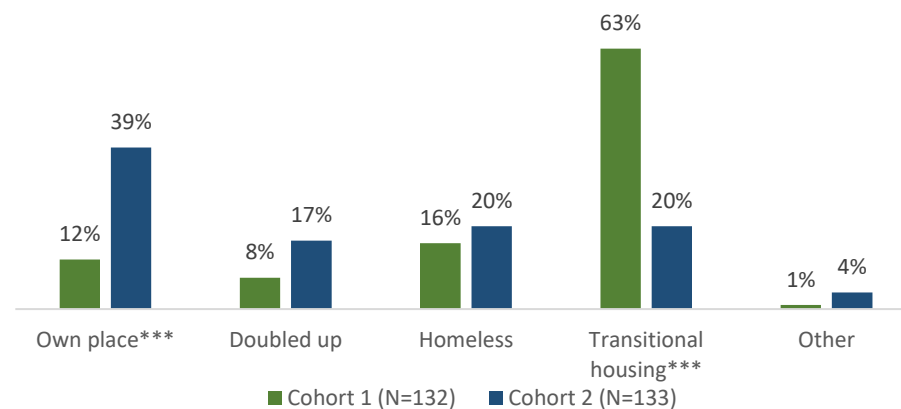
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Figure E-5B. Where Families are Living Six Months after Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance – Pierce County



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Figure E-5C. Where Families are Living Six Months after Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance – Snohomish County



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Table E-9. Mean Number of Nights in Each Location

	Tri-County		King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
	Cohort 1 (N=392)	Cohort 2 (N=369)	Cohort 1 (N=133)	Cohort 2 (N=117)	Cohort 1 (N=127)	Cohort 2 (N=117)	Cohort 1 (N=132)	Cohort 2 (N=135)
Own place	24.6	61.4***	27.7	67.0***	35.5	72.8***	10.9	46.7***
Doubled up	12.5	29.4***	12.0	31.8**	20.4	31.2	5.2	25.6***
Homeless, in shelter	84.6	43.0***	93.8	35.1***	77.4	29.9***	82.3	61.3*
Homeless, in a place not meant for human habitation	0.9	15.5***	0.0	20.8***	2.7	8.4	0.1	17.0***
Transitional housing	54.6	24.0***	44.6	17.4***	38.5	32.1	80.0	22.6***
Other locations	2.5	4.8	1.8	5.4	5.2	3.5	0.6	5.4*
Missing	0.1	1.0	0.0	1.8	0.2	1.1	0.0	0.2

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Figure E-6A. Distribution of Nights Homeless (Sheltered and Unsheltered) in the Six Months Following System Entry – King County

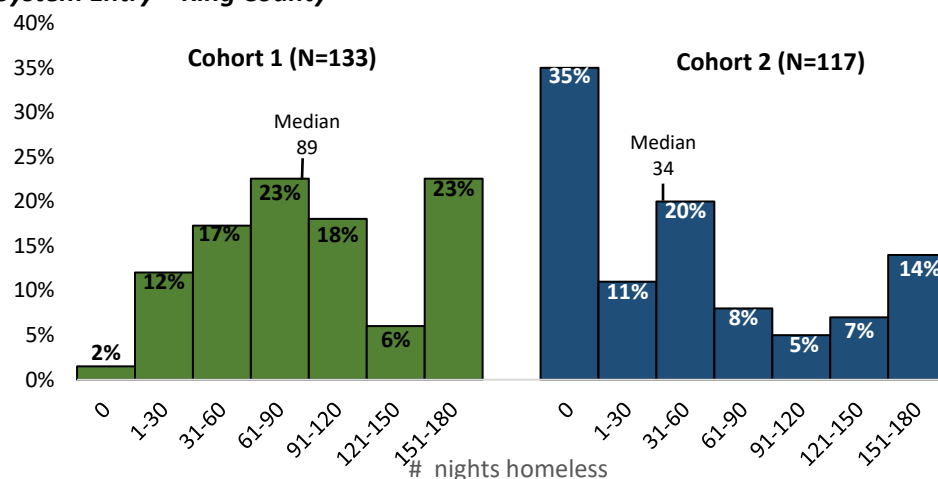


Figure E-6B. Distribution of Nights Homeless (Sheltered and Unsheltered) in the Six Months Following System Entry – Pierce County

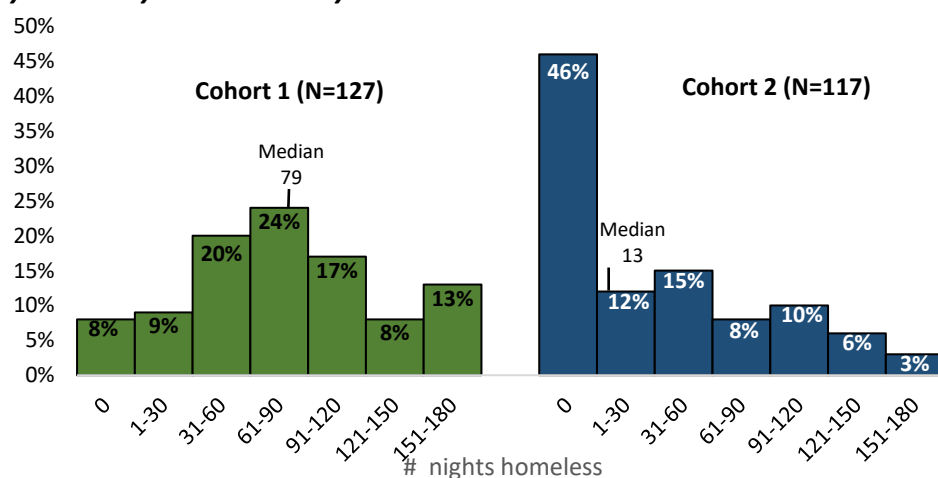


Figure E-6C. Distribution of Nights Homeless (Sheltered and Unsheltered) in the Six Months Following System Entry – Snohomish County

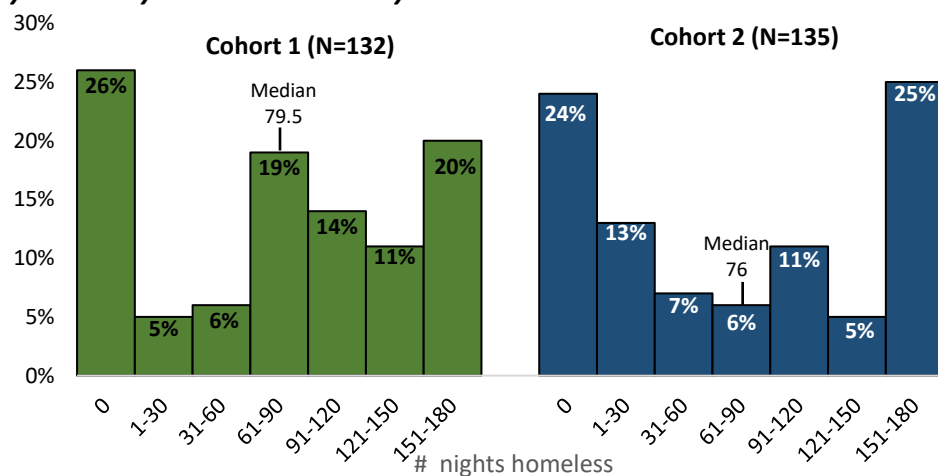


Figure E-7A. Parent-Child Intactness at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – King County

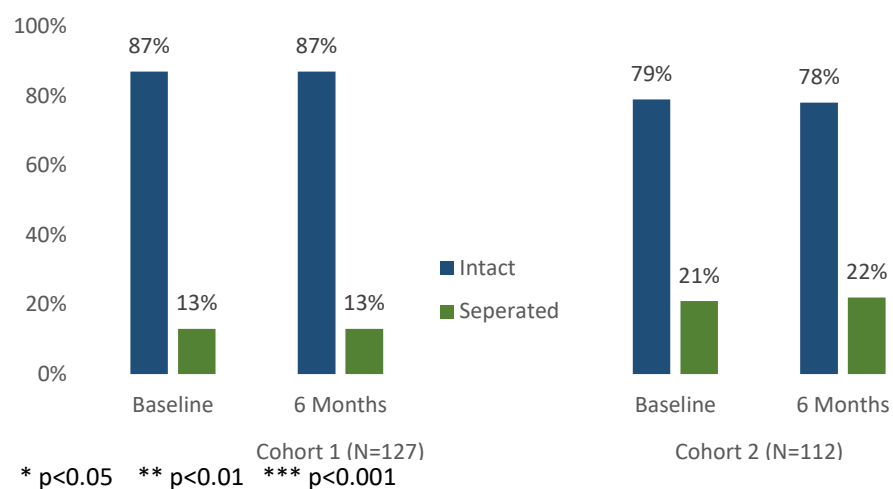


Figure E-7B. Parent-Child Intactness at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – Pierce County

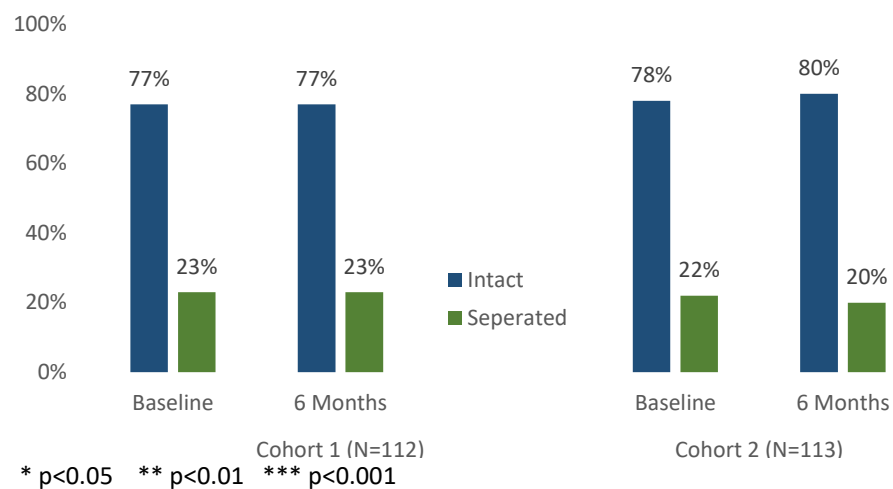


Figure E-7C. Parent-Child Intactness at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – Snohomish County

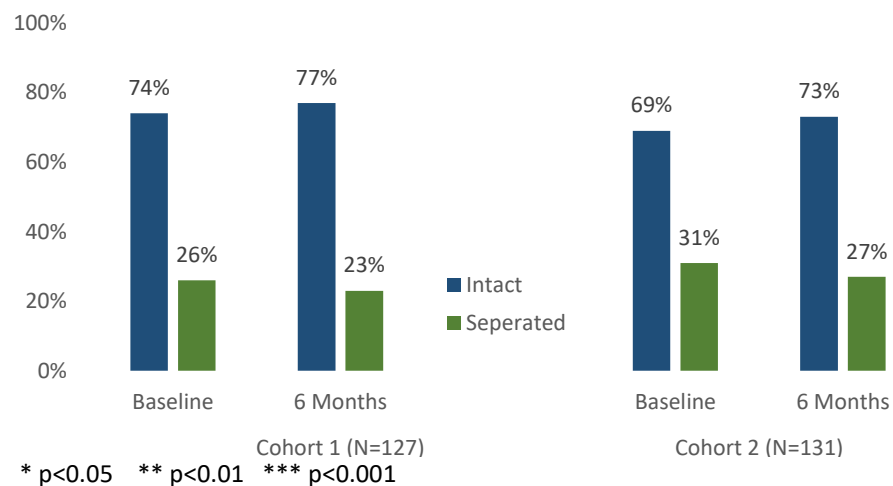


Figure E-8A. Employment at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – King County

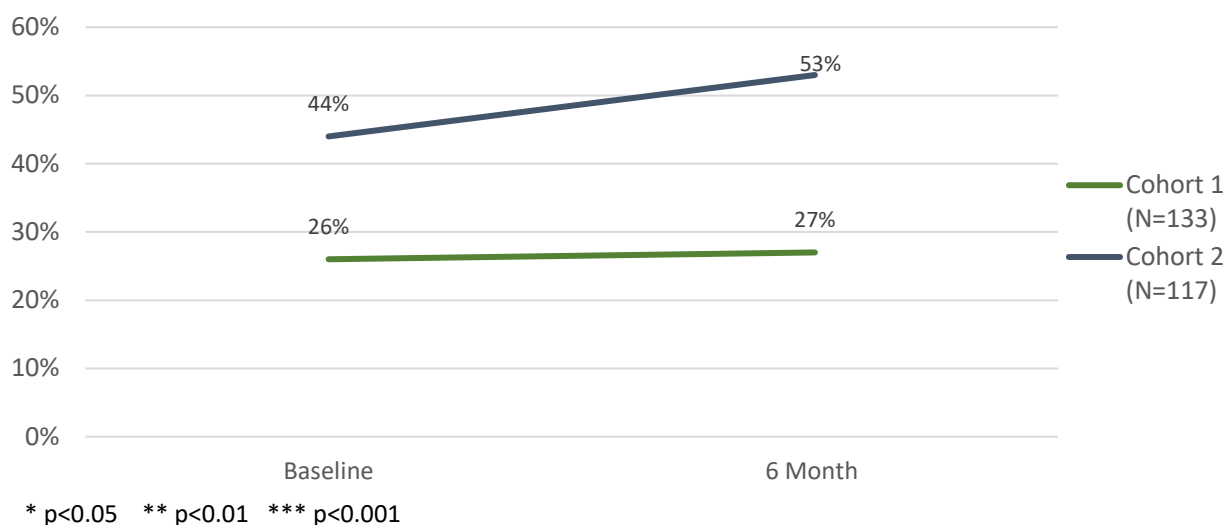


Figure E-8B. Employment at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – Pierce County

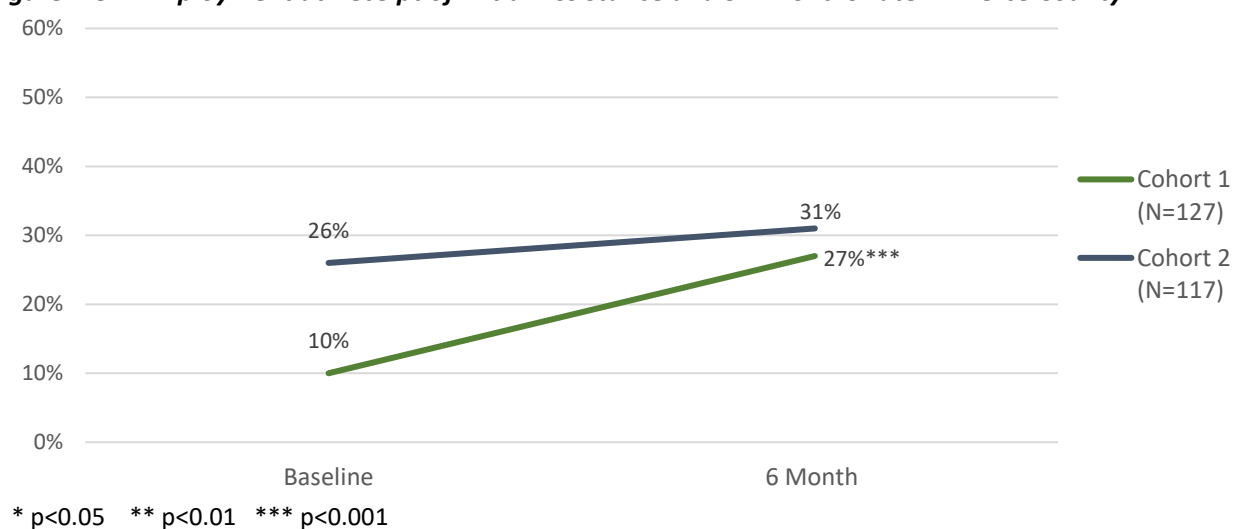


Figure E-8C. Employment at Receipt of Initial Assistance and Six Months Later – Snohomish County

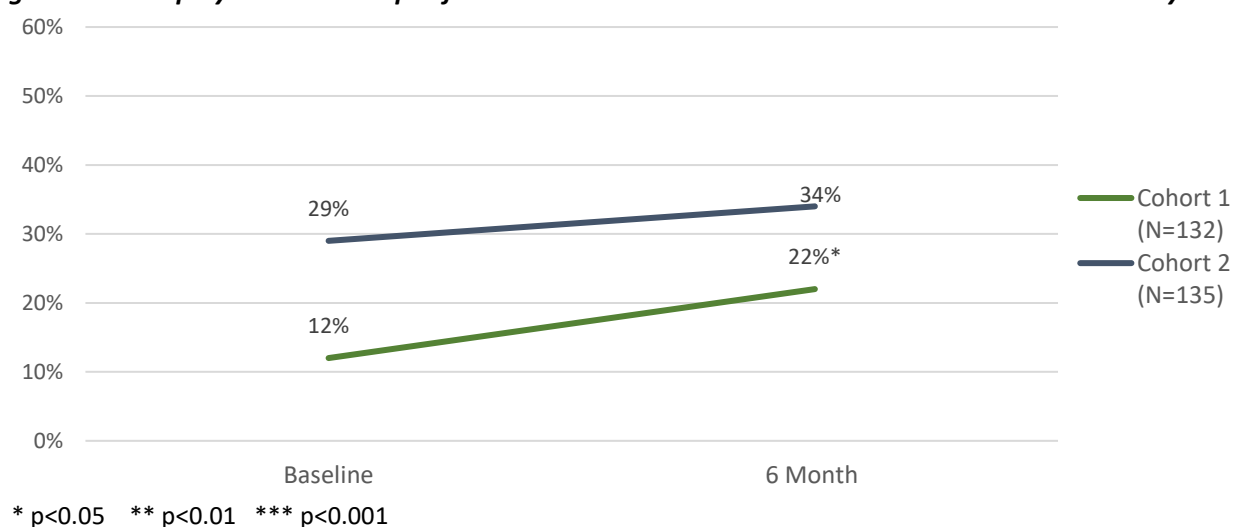
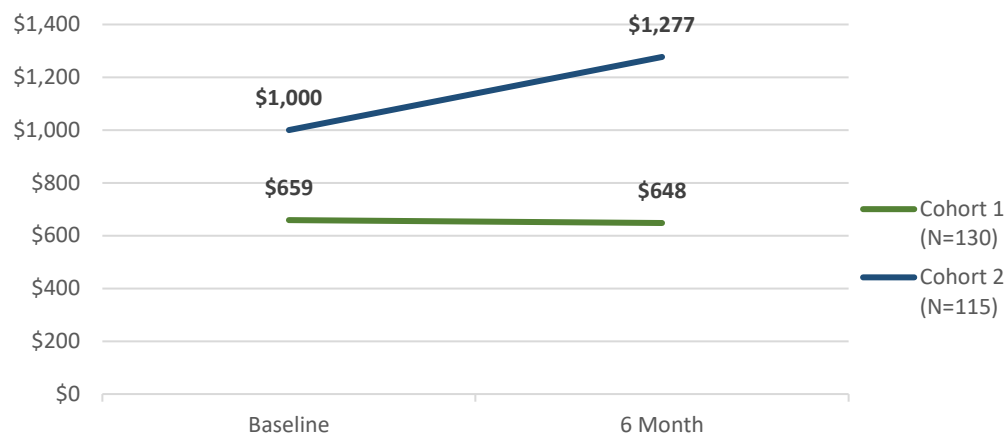


Figure E-9A. Median Monthly Income at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance

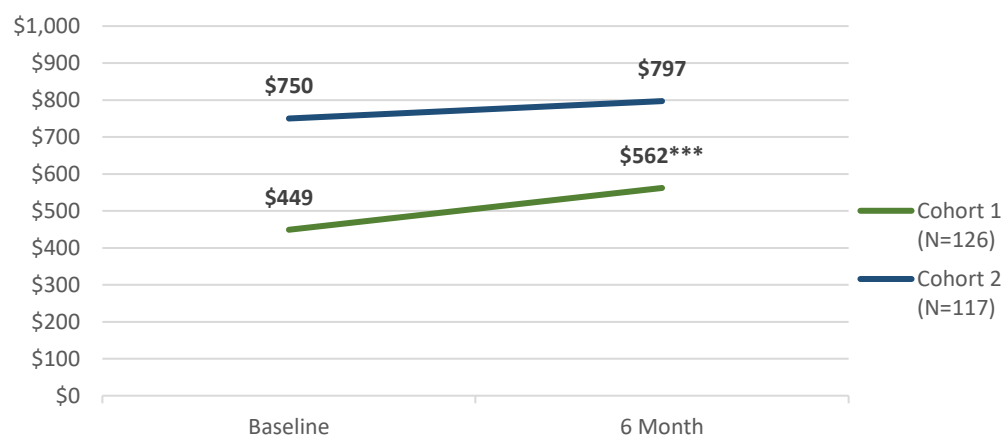
– King County



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Figure E-9B. Median Monthly Income at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance

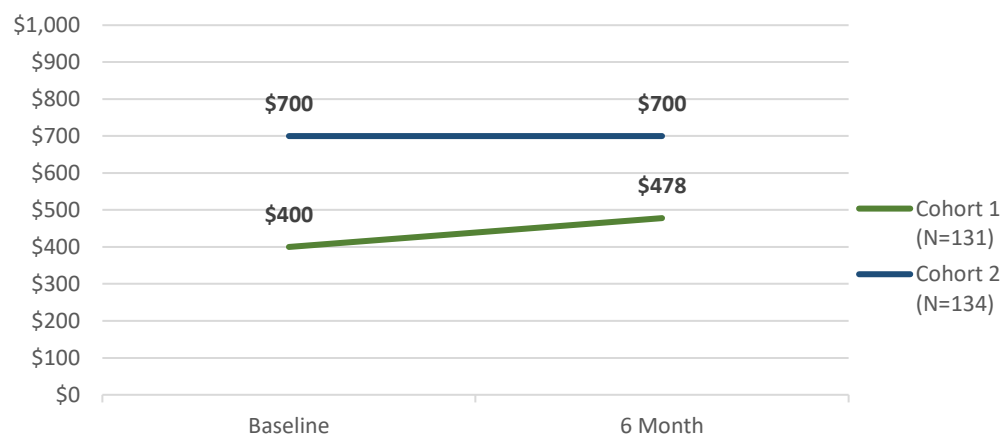
– Pierce County



* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

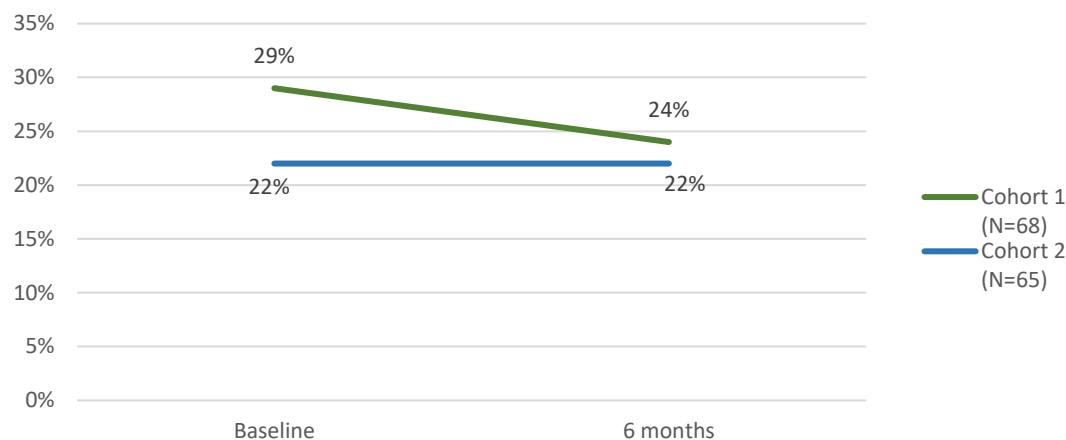
Figure E-9C. Median Monthly Income at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance

– Snohomish County



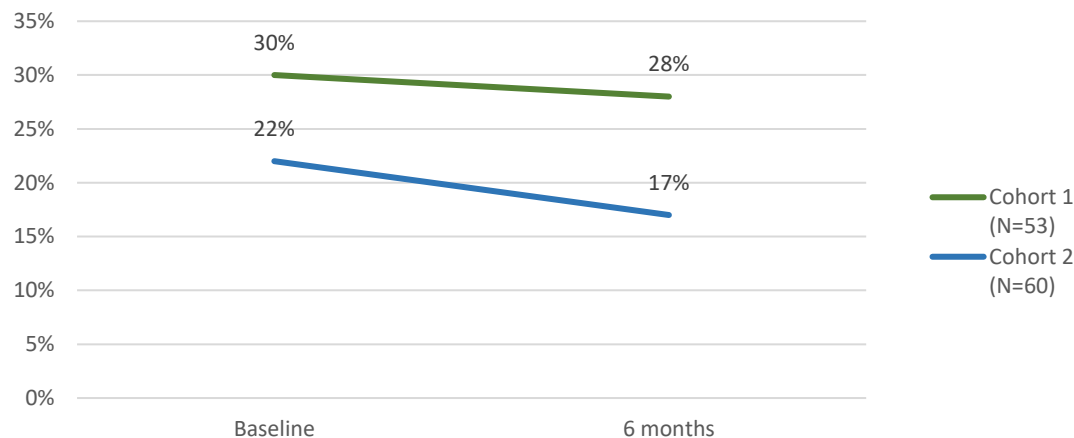
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Figure E-10A. Percentage of School-Aged Children with Chronic Absenteeism at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – King County



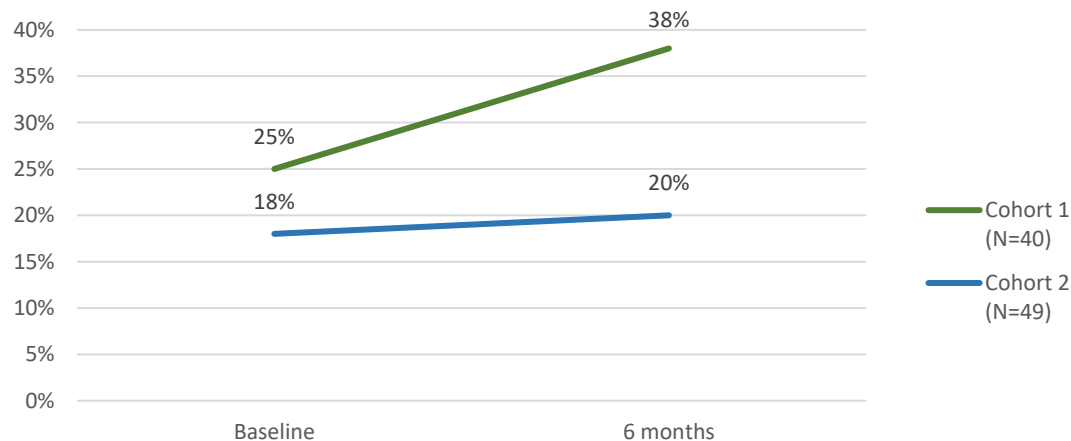
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Figure E-10B. Percentage of School-Aged Children with Chronic Absenteeism at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – Pierce County



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Figure E-10C. Percentage of School-Aged Children with Chronic Absenteeism at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – Snohomish County



* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Figure E-11A. Percentage of School-Aged Children that Changed Schools at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – King County

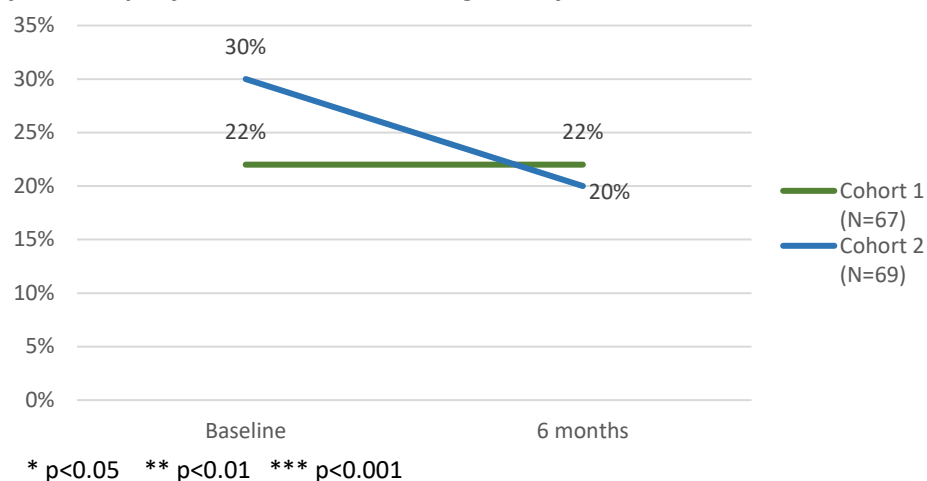


Figure E-11B. Percentage of School-Aged Children that Changed Schools at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – Pierce County

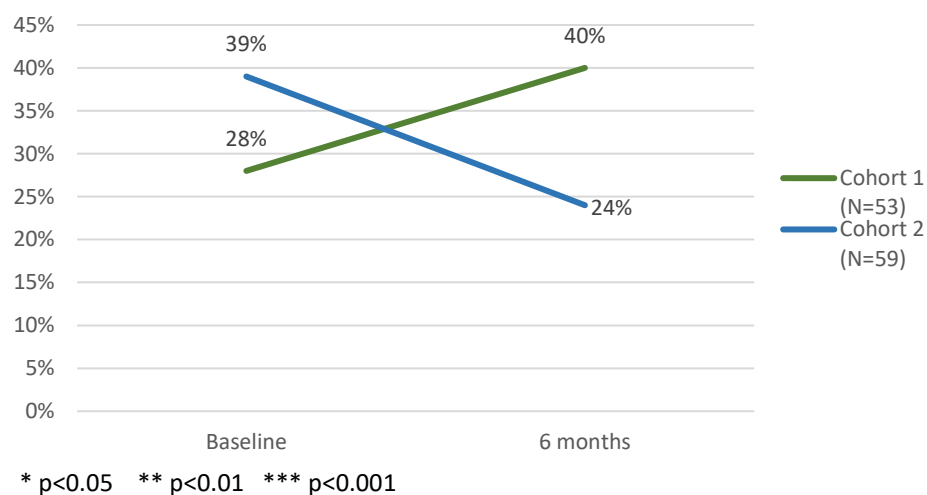
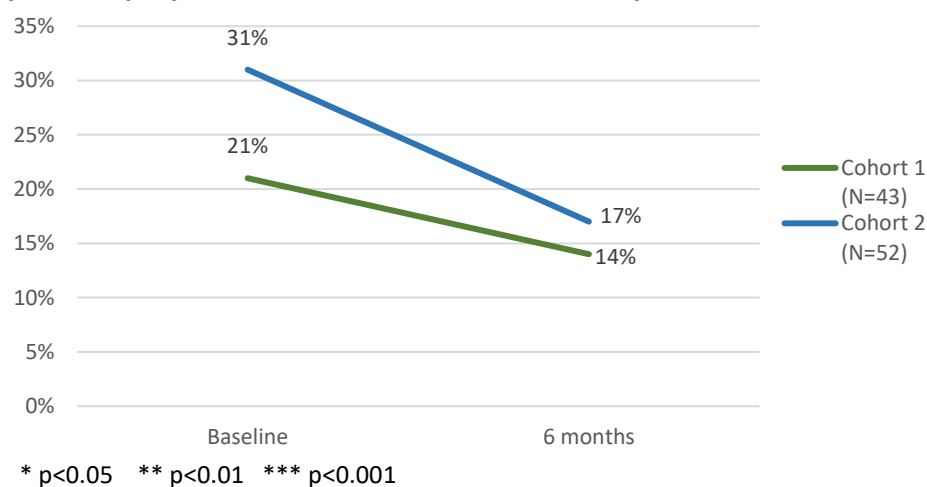
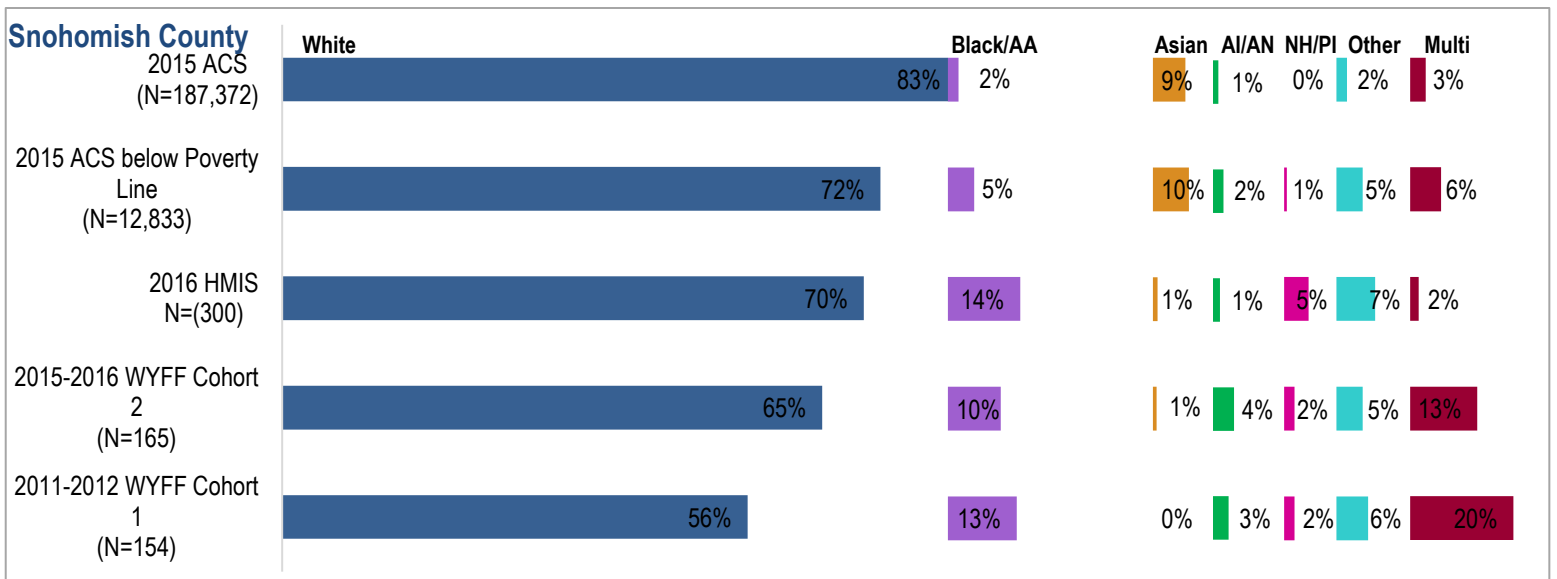
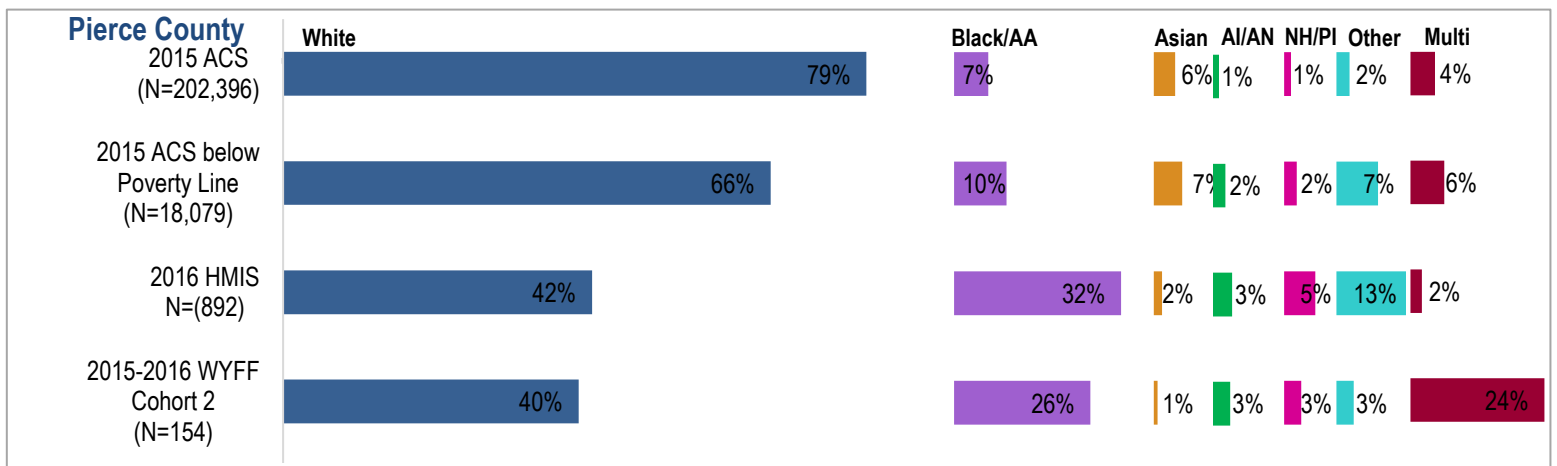
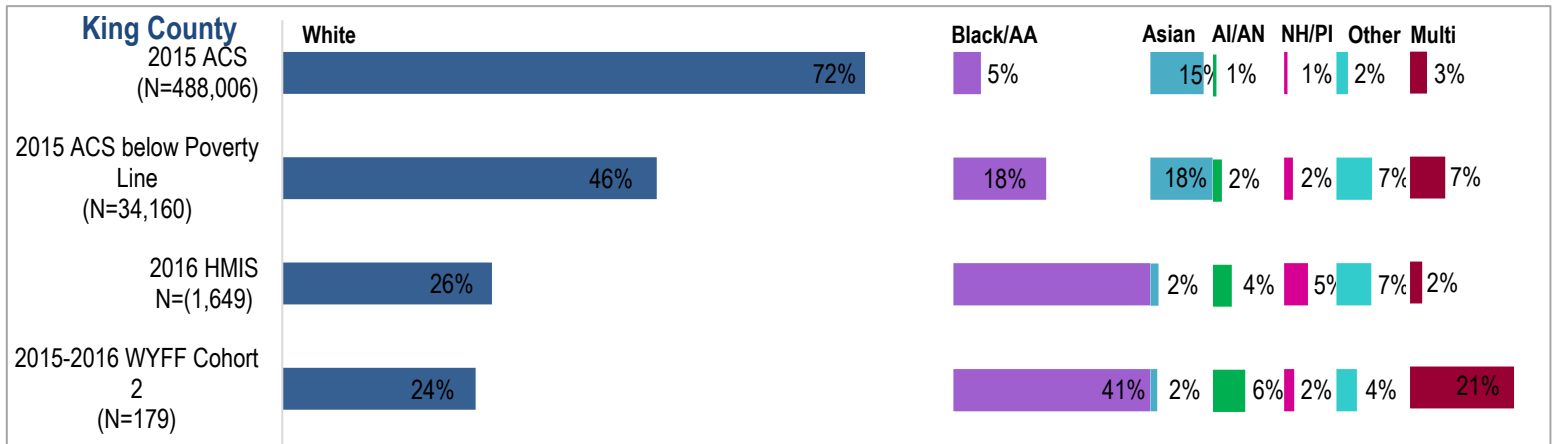


Figure E-11C. Percentage of School-Aged Children that Changed Schools at Baseline and Six Months after Receipt of Initial Assistance – Snohomish County



Appendix F. Race Distribution by County



Appendix G. Members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee

Amanda Andere, CEO, Founders Together to End Homelessness

Dr. Gregg Colburn, Assistant Professor, Runstad Department of Real Estate, University of Washington

Mary Cunningham, Vice President for Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy, Urban Institute

Katharine Gale, Principal Associate, Focus Strategies

Katie Hong, Director of Youth Homelessness, Raikes Foundation

Ted Kelleher, Manager, WA State Department of Commerce

*Jim Mayfield, Senior Research Scientist, Research and Data Analysis Division, WA State Department of
Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis*

Gordon McHenry, President and CEO, Solid Ground

Annie Pennucci, Director of Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation, Building Changes

*Dr. Marybeth Shinn, Professor, Department of Human and Organizational Development, Vanderbilt
University*

Debbie Thiele, Managing Director, Corporation for Supportive Housing