



King County

Department of Community and Human Services

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2012 – 2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy:

Activity 2.6 B: Career Connections

1. Goal

The primary goal of this activity is to prevent and reduce homelessness.

2. Strategy

The Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) set a goal of Ending Homelessness.

3. Activity 2.6 B Career Connections

Activity 2.6 B, Career Connections is one of two activities described in the Service Improvement Plan under Employment and Training.

4. Service Needs, Populations to be Served, and Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

a) Service Needs

Education and training and career pathway employment are fundamental to gaining and maintaining financial stability and achieving self-sufficiency. Client data in 2007 from King County's Housing Stability Program show that job loss or reduction in work hours were the most common factors contributing to an eviction or imminent loss of housing. While King County enjoys relative economic prosperity as we emerge from current recession, there are many for whom both livable wage employment opportunities and stable housing remain elusive, as the following statistics demonstrate:

- Households below 160 percent of federal poverty level (FPL) are the most at risk of homelessness.¹
- In King County, an individual earning 175 percent FPL falls short of the living wage by \$8,000. A family of three comes up \$25,000 short of FPL.²

¹ Housing Development Consortium. <http://www.housingconsortium.org/home/index.php>

² *Living Wage Jobs in the Current Economy*. Washington Job Gap Study. Northwest Federation of Community Organizations. 2006.

The current unemployment rate in King County masks the instability that many very low-income households face as they struggle to make ends meet in lower paying, less secure jobs without benefits.³ In our region, the growth of low-skilled, low-paying service sector jobs is expected to continue. Families and singles that become homeless are often trapped in low wage employment and need longer, intensive employment and training services to improve their circumstances for the long term.

As the Economic Opportunities Steering Committee recommendations from SkillUp Washington point out, the needs of families who want to upgrade their skills and earnings through further education and training are complex. Inadequate income and unstable housing are exacerbated by additional barriers that many very low-income residents face. Many have had unpleasant experiences with education and are reluctant to enter the post-secondary system. Barriers like low basic and technology skills, medical issues, mental illness, chemical dependency and substance abuse, learning and physical disabilities, involvement in the criminal justice system, domestic violence, and lack of affordable child care can all create serious obstacles to further education and career employment and stable housing. The services provided under the current system often cannot provide the long range support and continuity needed to realistically enable people to escape from the revolving poverty cycle. Further, people living in poverty face a loss of significant public benefits with only slight increases in income from better paying work. These “benefit cliffs” create a real disincentive to participation in longer term training and employment activities leading to higher earnings. Survival remains the primary motivation without a strong network of longer term support.

Veterans

While employment data on Veterans in King County is not readily available, we expect these figures to be comparable to national data. Nationally, the overall employment rate among (non-homeless) veterans in the civilian workforce is comparable to non-veterans. However, the 2006 unemployment rate among young veterans age 20-24 who left the military was nearly 11 percent, more than double that of the general civilian workforce at 4.6 percent.⁴ The U.S. Department of Labor notes that veterans 18-24 tend to rebound fairly quickly, and after approximately 10 months, have employment rates that are much closer to the general population.⁵ This suggests there is a critical period following military service during which increased access to employment for younger veterans could be especially beneficial.

While some veterans may require only a moderate level of employment assistance to re-enter the civilian job market, others with families face additional barriers to stable employment and housing, such as homelessness, substance abuse, mental health issues, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or mild TBI, physical injuries or even permanent disabilities as a result of their service.

- Approximately 11 percent of all veterans have a service-related disability.⁶

³ The unemployment rate provided by ESD includes only those activities actively seeking work.

⁴ In 2007, 200% FPL is \$20,420 for an individual and \$41,300 for a family of four.

⁵ U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/vets/vets20070017.htm>

⁶ *State of Veterans Employment*. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training. Presentation to the National Association of State Workforce Agencies. September, 2007.

- The 2007 One Night Count in King County found that 408 homeless individuals had served in the military.⁷
- Homeless Veterans and some with families are in need of these intensive services. While many homeless veterans are single, some with families are seeking services at the King County Veterans Program (KCVP).

b) Populations to be Served

One hundred homeless families/singles ready to benefit from the integrated housing/employment services available through Project Self Sufficiency for Families and Singles will be identified through a coordinated entry and assessment process in the shelter system county wide. Specific target populations for this Activity 2.8 (b) include the following:

- Forty low service need homeless families in shelters, assessed as able to benefit from immediate rapid re-housing for 12-18 months, integrated with intensive employment and training services and housing based case management. They may have barriers to employment, such as lack of appropriate education and training credentials and child care needs, but will be selected because they can be rapidly re-housed and are ready to participate in intensive employment and training services.
- Twenty high service need homeless families will receive longer term housing through Section 8 housing vouchers, housing based support services and intensive housing case management for up to 24 months integrated with intensive employment and training services.
- Forty low service need homeless couples or singles without children will receive rapid re-housing integrated with intensive employment and training services.
- Thirty of those served will be Veterans and/or their families.

c) Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance requires King County to consider the impacts of its policies and activities on its efforts to achieve fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency.

i) Will your activity have an impact on equity?

A disproportionate number of low-income households have lower educational attainments, hold lower skilled jobs with limited advancement opportunities, lack access to critical services and struggle to find affordable housing. Racial and ethnic minorities make up a disproportionately higher percentage of this already disadvantaged low-income population. Among the homeless, for example, an estimated 62 percent of homeless families are people of color, with African American families accounting for 43 percent of all homeless families. These activities will positively impact these issues.

⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.nr0.htm>. 2007 Annual One Night Count. Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless. <http://www.homelessinfo.org/ONCreportv2.pdf>

These employment activities will positively impact and improve financial self-sufficiency and positively impact and improve equity and social justice indicators for the people served. Living wage employment is a direct and practical service that improves the quality of life for disadvantaged people.

- ii) What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color, low-income communities or limited English proficiency communities be impacted?

The Levy funds outreach activities to women and people of color and they will be served very equitably in these employment and training activities. Persons of color are served proportionately.

- iii) What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?

We will assure that people will be served proportionately to their incidence in the population.

5. Activity Description

Levy funds will be used to provide intensive employment and training services integrated with rapid re-housing in Seattle-King County to homeless families and singles. Expansion efforts will focus on addressing the unique education and employment needs of homeless families, singles, and couples without children, 30 of who will be veterans. Project Self-Sufficiency will expand and enhance the current system of services through three intensive employment and training services specialists that will each serve 33 homeless clients selected at shelters through a coordinated entry assessment process for rapid re-housing or Section 8 vouchers and identified as ready to benefit from intensive employment and training services. King County Employment and Education Resources (EER) will partner with King County Housing and Community Development (HCD) funded case managers from Solid Ground, Multi-Service Center, Wellspring Family Services, Compass Housing Alliance (Compass-Renton, Compass Shoreline, Bennett House, Burien House, and Mark Cooper), King County Veterans' Program and Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) to serve low service need families, and provide wrap around, integrated housing and intensive employment and training services. The services will include both housing and employment and preparation for, navigation through, and completion support for post-secondary education credentials leading to self-sufficiency. Employment navigator staff will have offices at Worksource Renton but be mobile and able to bring services to customers throughout Seattle-King County. (Outreach)

Memorandums of Agreement will spell out the specific roles and responsibilities of each partner organization so that there is clarity and accountability for integration of services. Housing partners will lead the integrated case management services to simplify and streamline demands on client time and assure that all partners understand how the overall wraparound services fit together to help achieve the goal of long term self-sufficiency. Sources for supportive services will include housing related support from rapid re-housing partners, DSHS, Basic Food Employment and Training, Worksource WIA partners and others. Supportive services will include things that support the self-sufficiency goals such as

college tuition, child care, transportation, mental health, substance abuse and chemical dependency treatment, as well as other services. Services will address client barriers to successful education completion and employment, and improve clients' housing stability through increased earnings. On-ramp services to prepare for college success will be provided utilizing the resources of the Worksource Renton one stop employment center and other Worksource, college and community sites. Worksource Renton integrates employment and training resources from many different partner agencies, including Renton Technical College, BFET program, TANF/WorkFirst through DSHS/Employment Security, DVR, King County Veterans Program, and several WIA service providers through the Workforce Development Council. The program offers retention services for two years following job placement to assure earnings are sufficient for families and singles to afford permanent housing.

Wrap around services will be “customized” to individual client needs and goals and flexibly adapt to the changing needs of clients over time, as they progress on their career plan. Employment and support services may be provided at Worksource sites, housing sites, colleges, or other locations as needed to be responsive to client needs. Families and singles will be engaged and supported in this approach so that all adults and children in a family are part of the plan and support it. Special attention will be paid to child care, a critical support service for families and singles, to make sure that parents can concentrate on their education and work responsibilities.

Through collaboration with DSHS, - and other partner agencies, staff will help families and singles systematically analyze the impact of their employment on public benefits (SSI, TANF, Basic Food, Medicaid, childcare subsidy, etc.) clients are receiving. Staff will work to plan that loss of benefits does not serve as a disincentive to work as clients progress toward a self-sufficiency level. Agencies will consult with organizations such as Positive Solutions, which offers workshops and can provide assistance on public benefits. Services to Veterans and their families will be coordinated with the King County Veterans Program to assure that all benefits are incorporated into the client's employment plan. Thirty veterans and families will be specifically recruited, in collaboration with the KCVP, to assure that Veterans Levy Funds provide services to veterans.

6. Funds Available

The 2012 Service Improvement Plan identified the following allocations for this activity.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Veterans Levy	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 135,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
Human Services Levy	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 317,500	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000
Total	\$ 420,000	\$ 420,000	\$ 452,500	\$ 420,000	\$ 420,000	\$ 420,000

A total of \$ 420,000 was available in 2012 to implement this activity. During 2014 a one-time allocation of \$32,500 in Veterans and Human Services Levy funds was made to the activity to provide supportive services. Additional funds will be available annually through 2017 based on the activity's performance.

7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

Research from the SkillUp Washington Economic Opportunities Steering Committee and community and technical college outcome research shows that post-secondary training with completion of at least 45 credit hours and obtainment of a post-secondary credential is often needed to progress to higher paying technical careers. Best practices for employment programs targeted to this population would combine tailored, customized and integrated traditional employment services (skills assessment, job readiness training, job search and job placement, and post-employment retention services) with on ramps, bridges, navigation and coaching for post-secondary or apprenticeship training opportunities, combined with rapid re-housing and support services.⁸ This core set of employment services allows a program to address specific client immediate needs, determine appropriate on ramp services when the time is right, prepare clients for work, training and educational opportunities (such as GED, ESL, technology skills, coordinated scheduling, transportation planning and child care), and assist them in finding and keeping a better paying job. Most need to work while they are addressing their longer range education and career goals. Career coaching that empowers them to select and pursue their own relevant career goals is essential. The Self-Sufficiency Calculator provides a tailored benchmark and reality check for required earnings to become truly self-sufficient over time.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing has undertaken an initiative in partnership with supportive housing providers in New York City, Chicago and San Francisco. The initiative is a national model. The project infused a range of employment services in supportive housing (“place-based”) and addressed multiple barriers to employment. Client-driven case management linked clients to education, jobs, training and other services, including mental health and chemical dependency services.⁹ Findings from this effort showed that providing both employment and housing can be successful, especially when low-impact jobs are used as a starting point to build motivation to work.¹⁰

In New York, the Wellness, Comprehensive, Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (We CARE) program provides employment-focused services to public assistance clients.¹¹ The model includes comprehensive assessment, service plans tailored to clients’ individual needs and barriers, case management, vocational education or training, job placement services and retention support services following job placement. Successful programs focus on removing client barriers to employment, including unstable housing, and seek to place clients in living wage jobs with benefits and career advancement.

Specifically targeted to the homeless, the Homeless Intervention Project (HIP), administered by the Workforce Development Council, is a local effort to provide employment services to adults with multiple barriers. In addition to utilizing the best practices, four participating service agencies provide short-term individualized case management, direct support and training services.¹² The goal is to prepare clients for employment, quickly increase their

⁸ 2007 Annual One Night Count. Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless.

<http://www.homelessinfo.org/ONCreportv2.pdf>

⁹ *Recognizing Work as a Priority in Preventing or Ending Homelessness*. The Journal of Primary Prevention. Shaheen, G. & Rio, John. 2007.

¹⁰ *The Next Wave: Employing People with Multiple Barriers to Work*. Corporation for Supportive Housing. 2000.

¹¹ *Recognizing Work as a Priority in Preventing or Ending Homelessness*. The Journal of Primary Prevention. Shaheen, G. & Rio, John. 2007.

¹² *Innovative Employment Approaches and Programs for Low-Income Families*. The Urban Institute, Center on

housing stability and assist with the transition from homelessness. Client assessments identify barriers and needs, and link clients to mental health, substance abuse treatment and other needed services.

The SkillUp Economic Opportunities Steering Committee report entitled “Building A System for Homeless Families and At Risk Families to Attain Employment and Education Success” incorporates the recommendations from the Peer Learning Group led by the Seattle Jobs Initiative that examined strategies for building effective on ramps and bridges to post-secondary education for low income adults. These recommendations emphasized a need for simplifying and standardizing the enrollment and navigation processes across King County colleges. In addition, the recommendations called for education navigators that would work with clients in developing educational plans, enrollment, financial aid and fund sources, and access to other services. To help facilitate these recommendations, a navigator work group which includes King County Work Training has been convened by Seattle Jobs Initiative to begin identifying best practices that can be shared across the network of navigators that has been steadily developing as the demand for postsecondary training grows.

Many of the recommendations are adapted for homeless families and singles and incorporated into Project Self-Sufficiency both in the areas of systems change and improvements and service delivery integration through seamless wraparound services for housing, education and employment. The complex needs of homeless families necessitates that basic housing and employment needs are addressed immediately in an integrated plan as the longer term career development plan is developed and implemented. Families often have multiple case managers from the multiple systems they must navigate to survive. Integrating and streamlining their case management demands frees up time and energy for pursuing education and career goals.

Some of the key elements from the Economic Opportunities Committee findings that are integrated into this program design include:

System Changes

- Practical system integration improvements across 15 WorkSource Renton partners from multiple systems, including DSHS/TANF, BFET, Employment Security/Work First, Renton Technical College, King County Veterans Program, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partners, providing cross system training to better align resources and services and obtain training waivers where required.
- Basic skills instruction, including computer technology, on site at Worksource Renton through Renton Technical College, Microsoft Unlimited Potential, and customized instruction and computer lab support and facilitated access to these services at other sites throughout Seattle-King County.
- Arranging for college credit bridge courses on site at Worksource Renton through college partners, including Renton Technical College and Bellevue College.
- Launching a membership model that creates a supportive environment with computer technology resources in Worksource Renton and other sites in Seattle-King County where families/clients can get ongoing support and access to resources over time as they build their own personal path to self-sufficiency.

Labor, Human Services and Population. 2007.

Housing-based Case Management

- An integrated Career Plan for Self-Sufficiency housing/employment plan with one lead case manager from the rapid re-housing program that will facilitate streamlining and integrating unified case management across multiple systems, including housing, TANF, education, employment and training.
- Conducting whole family assessment that includes careful analysis and long term strategies to negotiate benefit cliffs over time and build momentum for the Career Plan for Self-Sufficiency.

Employment Services and Education

- Career and job coaching to assure long term success and build empowerment skills and personal confidence through a Career Coaching Pilot Project. -, DSHS, and Project Self-Sufficiency will align the services of frontline staff across systems and strengthen their understanding of the basic principles of encouragement and empowerment.
- Enhancing intensive employment services for homeless families and individuals in the Worksource one stop employment system, so that one stop partner services like WIA American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus training funds become accessible to homeless families and individuals as part of an in depth on ramp to employment, post-secondary education and/or apprenticeships
- College Navigator assistance to facilitate easier access to accurate information, relevant coursework and credentials in better paying fields and the financial resources to make an integrated career plan practical.
- Access to internships and jobs through Worksource partners, utilizing the integrated Business Services Team at Worksource Renton, in partnership with the Employment Security Department and the Workforce Development Council and Operators.
- Integrating asset building into family self-sufficiency planning in partnership with the Asset Building Coalition.
- Taking flexible tailored services to customers throughout Seattle-King County as needed to meet the needs of homeless customers and building customized on ramps that support their Career Plan for Self-Sufficiency.
- Coaching and assistance in accessing functional computer technology and high speed internet access for successful distance learning.
- Delivering customized employment, coaching and on ramp services throughout Seattle-King County in homes, neighborhoods, libraries, Worksource sites and colleges in ways that make it practical for them to make progress over time on their Career Plan for Self-sufficiency. (outreach)
- Providing long term employment retention and wage progression support, including support services, to assure momentum and ongoing problem solving assistance.

Current homeless employment programs place clients in jobs averaging \$9.81 an hour and are often part time and without benefits. Project Self-Sufficiency proposes a new intensive, longer-term coordinated strategy to significantly improve these earnings over time and incorporates SkillUp Washington research showing that post-secondary students that

complete at least 45 credit hours in a community or technical college, and achieve a credential or diploma, earn significantly more. Housing and a job are the first priority and will be addressed immediately as work is begun on the longer range Career Plan for Self-Sufficiency. The research also shows those clients can progress over time on a clear career pathway that increases earnings. Rapid re-housing agencies will provide comprehensive integrated case management services that will support families and singles as they pursue their education and work goals.

8. Service Partnerships

Planning for this program was carried out by King County Work Training Program, Housing and Community Development, Veteran’s Program, DSHS/BuRSST for Prosperity, Worksource Renton partners, and SkillUp Washington. Solid Ground, Multi-Service Center, Wellspring Family Services, Compass Housing Alliance (Compass-Renton, Compass Shoreline, Bennett House, Burien House, and Mark Cooper), King County Veterans’ Program and LIHI will be the Rapid Re-Housing partners for the 40 low service need families and the singles and couples without children and will partner with the - Landlord Liaison Project to secure housing.

This strategy, with its emphasis on homelessness prevention through increased employment outcomes, is aligned with King County Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) Ten Year Plan. The CEH has recently increased this focus by adding a member from the employment/workforce development system to its Inter-Agency Council. - This strategy is specifically aligned with the Gates Family Homeless Plan as part of the Economic Opportunity Pillar.

9. Performance Measures

The following performance measures were identified by the Levy’s Evaluation Team. Performance measures are reviewed annually. Updated performance measures can be found in the *2012 - 2017 Levy Evaluation Plan Implementation Plan and Activity Level Evaluation Templates* on the Levy web site:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy.aspx>

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	Most Recent Performance	2012 Target(s)	Data Source
Treatment/ Intervention	• Clients served	122	122	Report Card - Services
	• Clients entering an educational program	38	38	Report Card - Services
	• Clients obtained new jobs	29	29	Report Card - Services
	• Clients increase self-sufficiency • Clients retain jobs	Not measured 79%	80% 79%	Report Card - Outcomes Report Card - Outcomes