

KCRHA

YHDP HMIS Expansion: Problem Statement and Deliverables Overview

Supplemental materials, submitted for context alongside the New Project Application

The Problem

Countywide, the 2026 Point-in-Time Count identified 18,365 people experiencing homelessness in King County, a 9% increase since 2024 (16,868) and a 37% increase since 2022 (13,368). The share who are unsheltered rather than in shelter has climbed steadily, 57% in 2022, 58% in 2024, and 64% in 2026. Shelter capacity has not kept pace, emergency shelter beds fell from 5,958 to 5,269 between 2024 and 2026, a loss of 689 beds driven largely by reductions in family shelter capacity. King County now has roughly one shelter bed for every three people who need one.

Among unaccompanied youth specifically, the number counted as unsheltered rose from 438 in 2024 to 475 in 2026, even as the number in emergency shelter or transitional housing fell from 389 to 326 over the same period. The share of unaccompanied youth who are unsheltered, rather than sheltered, rose from roughly 53% to 59%.

Four System Gaps

Beyond the top-line PIT figures, four specific system gaps limit King County's ability to respond effectively to youth homelessness. These four gaps compound each other: better identification data improves matching to the right intervention, better understanding of interventions improves the ability to measure whether they work, and better measurement closes the loop back into a more complete, accurate picture of youth homelessness across the system.

1. Coordinated entry lacks systematic performance monitoring for youth. The assessment and prioritization tools are in use, but there is no established mechanism for evaluating whether they function as intended or produce measurable improvements in placement outcomes.
2. Inflow counting depends on incomplete cross-system connections. Without stronger data-sharing agreements with schools, juvenile justice, child welfare, and other systems that first encounter youth, the true scale and character of youth homelessness is undercounted.
3. The youth-dedicated bed and unit inventory lacks operational detail. KCRHA maintains this inventory, but it lacks the support types and documented placement pathways needed to match youth quickly and accurately to the right resource.
4. Youth-specific data collection standards don't yet exist. KCRHA's current data collection policies apply system-wide but do not yet include youth-specific standards, leaving inconsistency in how youth data is captured across street outreach and case conferencing.

Why This Approach

This approach reflects national and state best practice in upstream, data-driven homelessness response, including Built for Zero's by-name-list and quality-improvement model for reaching functional zero, and builds on Washington's own track record piloting similar youth-specific approaches.

This project matches HUD's four stated Goals for YHDP directly. It prevents and ends youth homelessness by closing the gap between identification and placement through a live, unit-level inventory and the youth by-name list. It facilitates self-sufficiency by strengthening referral pathways to education, employment, and behavioral health support. It innovates and expands capacity by building new coordinated entry, assessment, dashboard, and provider-onboarding tools specific to youth. And it

reduces trauma and provides safety by closing the youth-specific street outreach data policy gap and strengthening referral pathways to trafficking, domestic violence, and behavioral health partners.

What We're Proposing and How We'll Measure It

This is what we're actually doing with this investment, and how we'll know it worked.

What We're Doing	How We'll Measure Success
Complete the youth by-name list, used in case conferencing, with access roles defined	Largely done already, an early win to build on
Build a live, unit-level inventory of youth housing and shelter capacity with eligibility and availability data	50%+ coverage in Year 1, 90%+ by Year 2
Onboard new youth-serving providers onto HMIS	3-5 providers in Year 1
Build out referral and coordinated entry pathways and assessments for youth	Initial CE assessment tool deployed Year 1, fully built out Year 2
Conduct a landscape analysis of referral pathways into youth housing and shelter	Completed by end of Q2, Year 1; findings published and tracked year over year
Build inflow/outflow and performance dashboards for youth projects	Beta dashboard Year 1, full performance dashboard Year 2
Level-set youth-specific street outreach data policies with the System Performance Committee	Policy gap closed in Year 1 (date of engagement, Current Living Situation use, encampment definition, exit standards)
Reach full HMIS participation among youth programs	75% by 2027