### Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot

**Year One Progress: 2SSB 5800 Pilot Program**

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

Housing and food insecurity are critical barriers that undermine persistence and completion rates for postsecondary students.\(^1\) Around the country, 2020 public health and economic crises have increased the number of students experiencing financial hardship and instability.\(^2\) In Washington, college students face significant challenges meeting their basic needs while completing their credentials, with disproportionate impacts on students of color and students with marginalized identities and circumstances.\(^3\)

Addressing these barriers, Washington’s **Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) Pilot** was enacted in 2019 legislation (2SSB 5800) and is administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council and Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. SSEH Pilot is building support systems for students facing homelessness on six public campuses: Eastern Washington University, Edmonds College, South Puget Sound Community College, Walla Walla Community College, Western Washington University, and Yakima Valley College.

The SSEH Pilot institutions have supported students during this year’s unprecedented public health and economic crises. The continuation of funding and systems change efforts will increase postsecondary attainment among vulnerable students, enhancing the state’s efforts to ensure an equitable economic recovery.

### How common is food and housing insecurity on Pilot campuses?

Students reported high levels of unmet basic needs in the fall of 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution*</th>
<th>Food Insecurity</th>
<th>Housing Insecurity</th>
<th>Homelessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Washington University**</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Washington University</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonds College</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Puget Sound Community College</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakima Valley College</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\ast\) WWCC data not available at the time of this report. **EWU used Active Minds Survey; all others used #RealCollege Survey from Hope Center for College, Community and Justice

### Who are the students served by the Pilot in 2020?

Pilot institutions served **109 students** in the five months of the start-up year (February - June).

**All students served were experiencing or at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness, and 83% reported low or marginal food security. Despite these barriers, all SSEH students completed the term and persisted to their next term.**

Within a range of student demographics, the average student age was 29, the majority identified as female, and 61% were supporting dependents. A third of the students served were employed at least part-time. Preliminary race and ethnicity data is limited and will require further analysis in completion of the pilot.

---

What kinds of accommodations and services are the SSEH Pilot institutions providing?
The SSEH Pilot institutions had just begun to identify and serve students in February 2020 when they had to quickly pivot to remote operations because of the state’s COVID-19 Stay Home, Stay Healthy measures. Although campus closures and new safety protocols impacted previously planned service models, SSEH Pilot institutions modified their plans and implemented several critical accommodations to support postsecondary students experiencing homelessness.

**Housing: Emergency, Short-term and Homelessness Prevention was provided in a variety of models.**
- EWU and WWU provided on-campus residence stays, including between term periods.
- SPSCC leased apartments for flexible-length stays for students experiencing homelessness.
- EC connected students with community housing resources and emergency hotel stays.
- All SSEH Pilots provided emergency rental assistance.

**Food assistance addressed basic food insecurity that is often intertwined with homelessness.**
- EC and WWCC connected students with Basic Food benefits.
- EC served students with campus pantries and referrals to community food resources.
- All SSEH Pilots provided pre-paid grocery cards to improve access during campus closures.

**Case management and referral to campus and community resources supported complex needs and longer-term stability.**
- EC partnered with the Jean Kim Foundation to employ a part-time case manager.
- SPSCC connected students with housing and additional community resources.
- EWU provided case management with the support of graduate students.
- WWU leveraged Passport Program staffing to provide case management.

**Showers and hygiene, laundry, storage, and mailstop access were provided as discrete services or woven into residence hall and apartment stays.**
- EWU, WWU, and SPSCC provided housing inclusive of these accommodations.
- EC provided staffing and access to showers on campus and nearby hygiene center.
- WWCC and YVC distributed hygiene kits to students.

**Technology support became especially important for the quick transition to remote learning during the pandemic.**
- All SSEH Pilots provided computers, internet devices, and services by leveraging resources.

**Transportation**
- EC and YVC provided public transportation passes and prepaid gas cards.

_SSEH is so valuable to our marginalized students who come from poverty or who are without homes while attending school. This program helped a student I referred from having to choose an unsafe housing option or be homeless._ Mental Health Counselor, WWU

How is the SSEH Pilot leading Washington’s basic needs efforts?
In the second program year, pilot campuses are focusing on adaptive solutions to support students who are experiencing homelessness, sharing effective practices, and improving Washington’s understanding of addressing postsecondary basic needs.
- Pilot campuses are serving increasing numbers of students as they solidify improvements in campus coordination, communication, and external partnerships.
- Campuses statewide are learning effective practices through a quarterly learning community, with over 500 participants so far this year.
- SSEH partners are planning the development of a Washington assessment for institutional, regional, and statewide data on postsecondary unmet basic needs.

For more information about the Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Pilot:
Ami Magisos, Assistant Director Policy, Amim@wsac.wa.gov and Jessica Porter, Program Coordinator, JPorter@sbctc.edu