

Gates Foundation gives \$4.5 million for 180 homes for homeless

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SEATTLE (AP) -- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on Thursday announced \$4.5 million in grants to pay for 180 new units of affordable housing in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties as well as social services to support homeless families or those at risk of becoming homeless.

The grants nearly complete the foundation's Sound Families project, which began in 2000. The program's goal is to triple the amount of "service-enriched housing" for families in the three-county region.

The services offered to families in the program include mental health counseling, child care, job training, money for work clothes, chemical dependency counseling, transportation, domestic violence counseling, legal advocacy, budgeting assistance and food programs.

Since 2000, the foundation has provided \$38.6 million for 1,445 new units of supportive housing. The 11 grants announced Thursday will pay for 74 units of housing in King County, 44 units in Pierce County and 62 units in Snohomish County.

The money will go to a variety of nonprofit organizations that help the homeless.

The housing provided by Sound Families is transitional housing, which is not permanent housing but a way for homeless people to move from a shelter or the street to a more stable home.

The foundation says a recent study by the University of Washington School of Social Work found that two-thirds of the assisted families moved into permanent housing as they left the program, nearly half the adults had jobs and their income increased by \$1 an hour between the time they entered and exited the program.