

EVALUATION OF THE SOUND FAMILIES INITIATIVE

FINAL FINDINGS SUMMARY:
A CLOSER LOOK AT FAMILIES' LIVES
DURING AND AFTER SUPPORTIVE
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

DECEMBER 2007

SOUND *families*



PREPARED FOR THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION
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Initiative Overview

Launched in 2000, Sound Families was a multi-year, \$40 million investment by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to triple the number of service-enriched housing units for homeless families in Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties in the state of Washington. Over the life of the initiative 1,445 units were funded, the majority of which implemented a transitional housing model.¹ As of June 2007, over 600 of these units were operational, and had served almost 1,500 families and more than 2,700 children. The initiative involved many collaborative relationships among non-profit and for-profit housing developers, property managers, service providers, and local housing authorities.

Families were screened by individual programs for entry into the transitional housing units. Many programs had a maximum two-year stay, though the average length of stay was just over 12 months.² Several strategies to obtain permanent housing were available to families at exit: Through agreements with local housing authorities, families may have received portable Section 8 vouchers, a housing subsidy that caps their rent at 30% of income, or they may have received priority for a public housing unit. Since its inception, the Initiative also encouraged a transition-in-place strategy at program sites where such a model was feasible. This allowed families to remain in the same housing complex, if not the same unit, once they finished receiving services as participants in the transitional program.

All Sound Families programs provided intensive case management, broadly defined as in-home weekly case management, plus phone contact, often more than once per week. The average caseload was 15 families per full-time case manager. Families who needed specialized services, such as drug and alcohol treatment, education, job training, mental health services, were usually referred to off-site providers. Typically there were no formal services offered following a family's exit from the transitional program.

Data Overview

Findings presented here draw on two types of evaluative data: The first, basic data reported by case managers on all families entering and exiting a Sound Families unit from the start of the Initiative in 2000 through June 30, 2007. These data provide a broad overview of outcomes on a large number of families and also allow examination of findings on county and local levels. The second dataset is longitudinal, and provides quantitative and qualitative data on 203 families in ten programs from the three counties who were interviewed by evaluators while in the program, at exit and at multiple points after exit. These longitudinal data allow a deeper examination of families' experiences and trends over time. Since families entered and exited

¹ Beginning in 2005, Sound Families also funded permanent supportive housing units.

² Section 8 vouchers, if available, typically became available to families after 12 successful months in a program, thus effecting a shorter length of stay.

programs at different points in time, and some were not able to be tracked over time, the number of families for whom data is available at each time point varies. For example, one year following exit from the programs, data are available for 85 families; at two years, 57 families; and at three years, 27 families. These families were demographically similar to all families served, though case study families were more likely to have more than one child due to a higher proportion of these ten programs having more units with multiple bedrooms than the overall portfolio of programs.

All Families Served: Brief Demographics

- 1,487 families were served in 610 Sound Families units within 52 programs; two-thirds of families (942) had exited transitional housing as of June 2007. These 1,487 families represent 1,717 adults and 2,738 children served.
- 85% of families were headed by a single caregiver, typically a single mother.
- Half of families had one child living with them in transitional housing; one-fourth had two; and one-fourth had three or more children.
- Primary caregivers' average age was 31 years, and the average child age was 6.5 years.
- Half of primary caregivers were Caucasian/non-Hispanic; one-fourth African American; and one-fourth Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or other/multiracial.³
- 70% of primary caregivers had at least a high school diploma or GED at entry into the transitional program.
- 64% of families had a previous episode of homelessness, some four or more episodes.
- Precipitating causes of homelessness as reported by case managers were multiple and interconnected, but most often included lack of affordable housing or a living wage, loss of income, and domestic violence.
- 65% of families' current homeless episodes had been six months or less in length.
- 44% of families came to the transitional program from an emergency shelter and 30% came from relatives' or friends' homes.

Key findings for all 942 families exiting a Sound Families unit

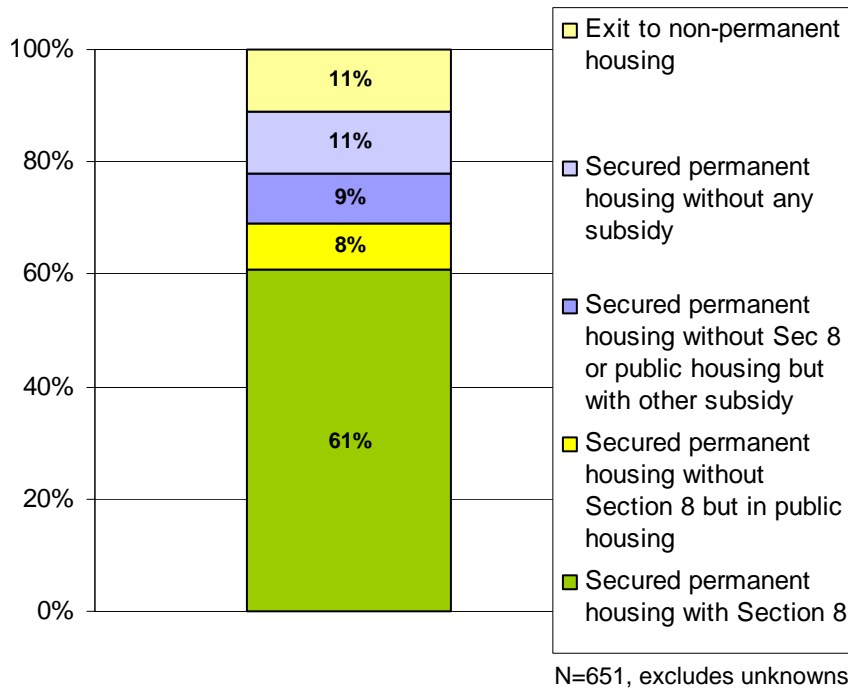
Housing

Two-thirds (68%) of all exiting families moved into permanent, non-time restricted, housing after an average of 12.3 months in service-enriched transitional housing programs. Among families who successfully completed transitional programs, 89% were able to secure permanent housing after exit.

³ See Appendix for race/ethnicity breakdowns by county.

In order to better understand housing outcomes for families who successfully completed programs, the figure below breaks down how permanent housing was achieved, and also shows that 11% of families successfully completing programs were not able to secure permanent housing, typically due to the lack of affordable housing in the region and not having a subsidy available to them. The majority of families completing programs (61%) secured permanent housing using a portable Section 8 voucher, received through partnerships between service and housing providers and local housing authorities. Another 8% of families were able to move into publicly subsidized housing—a strategy used largely in one county that had fewer Section 8 vouchers available—and 9% moved into another type of subsidized housing. Eleven percent were able to secure permanent housing without any type of subsidy.

Housing outcomes for families successfully completing transitional programs



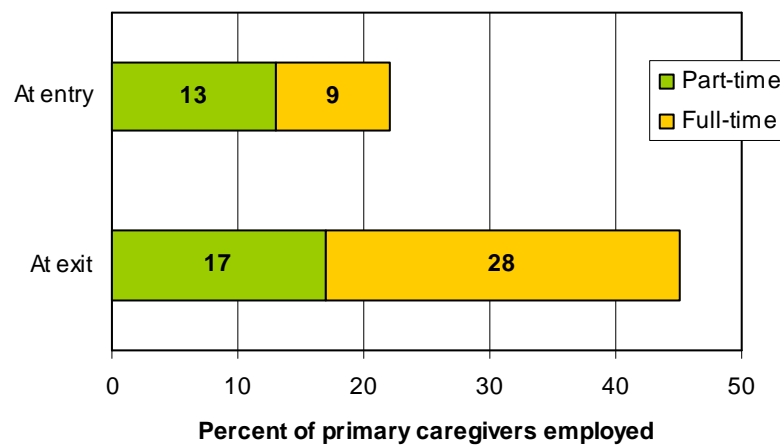
Housing subsidies were clearly instrumental in helping families afford permanent housing following a homeless episode. Among families who completed programs and did *not* exit with Section 8 vouchers, 68% were able to secure permanent housing—compared to the 89% of all families successfully completing programs who were able to secure permanent housing. Without Section 8, families most often exited to fair market rate housing (26%), ‘other’ subsidized housing (24%), or public housing (17%). Twenty percent moved in with family or friends compared to 9% of all families completing programs.

Other housing-related findings:

- 16% of exiting families were able to transition in place, meaning they were able to remain in the same unit or at least the same apartment complex after services ended. This was typically only possible if a Section 8 voucher was available to the family following exit. Several programs successfully implemented a transition-in-place model, while some programs did not offer this as an option, and some did but due to availability of units or the cost of rent, families were not able to transition in place.
- 25% of families were evicted or asked to leave their transitional housing units, most often for issues related to chemical dependency and/or mental health. Only 16% of these families were able to secure permanent housing; 38% moved in with family or friends; and 15% entered inpatient treatment programs, returned to emergency shelter, or entered another transitional program. The needs of families struggling with mental illness and chemical dependency often exceeded the capacity of what programs could provide, ultimately resulting in a family's departure. These families may be better served in permanent supportive housing programs in which a harm reduction model is implemented. (See April 2006 report examining this group in greater detail.)

Income and Employment

- Overall employment among primary caregivers increased from entry to exit: 45% were employed full- or part-time at exit compared to 22% at entry. Full-time employment tripled from entry to exit.



- The percent of families receiving TANF decreased commensurately with increases in employment, dropping from 67% at entry to 46% at exit.

- Nearly half of households (48%) increased their incomes between entry and exit. These increases were largely due to higher employment levels, modest wage gains, and accessing additional benefits for which they were eligible such as Medicaid, child support, and food stamps.

Longitudinal Outcomes for Families in Case Study Programs

To understand what happened to families after they exited and moved away from the supportive environments of their transitional programs, as well as from weekly contact with case managers, we turn to the sub-group of families who were interviewed and tracked over time.

Housing Following Exit

- Approximately 90% of families were able to maintain permanent housing over time with those not doing so either living with family or friends or back in a transitional program or emergency shelter.
- As household incomes increased, fewer families relied on Section 8 subsidies, though more than half of families continued to use vouchers to afford housing even three years after exit. The median rent assumed by families increased steadily over time, though remained less than half of median fair market rents (FMRs) across the region.

“People don’t understand how important it is to have a stable place to live for a year to give them a chance to financially and emotionally re-establish their life.”

Housing Stability and Satisfaction

Six months after exit, families frequently expressed pride in being stably housed and taking care of their responsibilities, most importantly being better able to care for their children. While they appreciated the support and skills learned through their programs, they definitely welcomed their independence from the program’s structure. Six months after the program, families were overall satisfied with the location of their homes though satisfaction with the safety of their neighborhoods decreased, perhaps because families had to move to less desirable areas to afford rent or to access low-income housing. While families were happy with the homes and apartments they accessed with Section 8 vouchers, they were not always aware of the extra expenses such as utilities. Help with utility bills was commonly needed by families after leaving programs.

“I’m pretty close to where I want to be. The program was a step. They helped me to focus and center on things that were hard for me to focus on. There’s no way on earth that I would afford what I have now without getting through the program.”

While case managers worked with families to create an exit plan that would cause the least disruption possible, for some families, initial moves were either temporary until they were able to move to a desired location or the first move did not work out. The result was a high level of mobility: 20% of families had lived in more than one place within six months of exiting, and again that in the next six months. Families continued to move frequently even after this first year following exit, though these moves appeared less disruptive to their lives and their children's schooling. Most moves were by choice rather than forced by a loss of housing. By three years after exit, 63% of families had lived in more than one place and half of them in more than two places. The majority of moves were to new neighborhoods, potentially disrupting local support networks.

Changes in Education

Seventy percent of primary caregivers entered transitional housing having at least a high school diploma or GED, typically setting the stage for them to focus on job training or further education rather than completing basic education courses. Given that most families spent an average of one year in a program, there was not ample time to complete many educational or training programs so completion for many primary caregivers occurred some time after exit. Still, 19% of families exited programs without a GED/diploma; they were somewhat more likely to have been asked to leave programs, but many families "successfully" completed programs without this basic level of education. The level of emphasis placed on higher education or job training varied from program to program, with most programs emphasizing compliance with WorkFirst and basic job preparedness and fewer prioritizing supporting caregivers in completing comprehensive vocational training or higher education. Many caregivers in follow-up interviews expressed a desire to return to school if they had the time and the money to secure better paying jobs.

"I think they (the transitional program) should make it possible for people to go back to school. I think schooling is a major thing to being able to get a good job, and one that you want to keep."

Changes in Employment and Household Income

At entry into programs, primary caregivers often lacked the stable employment histories, education and skills that would allow them to access well-paying jobs. The rather short length of time in programs combined with families working on other issues such as mental health often affected the ability to make substantial gains in job skills. Employment obtained while in programs was often in entry-level, low-paying jobs and did not provide benefits such as sick or vacation leave and health care. One consequence of this was that when a parent had a child with a prolonged sickness, they were more likely to be put in the untenable position of either

being fired or having to quit. Most jobs also did not offer opportunities for advancement and growth, and sometimes when they did, increases in wages resulted in a loss of means-tested benefits that reduced a family's overall income. Helping homeless families to find and keep jobs that offer wage progression over time requires addressing individual and system level barriers to employment. Homeless families often have multiple barriers that make finding and keeping jobs challenging, including domestic violence, chemical dependency, physical disabilities and chronic health problems, mental health issues, criminal records, low basic skills and learning disabilities, and, in some cases, language barriers.

"Those of us caught in the low-income, not the low-low-income have a really hard time. I have \$1,500 in medical bills. It seems like I make a lot per hour (\$16), and it's not like I am gambling it away. It goes toward car insurance, gas, childcare and rent. My childcare went up as well as my housing costs."

Employment findings

- Overall employment levels increased slowly in the first year following exit, but did not show much change in the ensuing years with approximately half of primary caregivers employed at least part-time.
- A similar plateau occurred with TANF receipt: Fewer families received TANF one year after exit than at exit, but over the next two years, the level of use stabilized at approximately 20% of families.
- Similarly, wages rose initially following exit at \$8.00/hour for this group, then flattened in the following years at approximately \$11/hour, still well below self-sufficiency levels. Some of the wage gains were tied to completion of job training or vocational education programs. When they obtained wage increases, some means-tested benefits such as childcare, medical coupons and food stamps, were cut leaving the family less financially well off. While transitional housing programs try to help families obtain an education and job training that will help them access better paying jobs, much of the case management efforts are directed towards helping to stabilize the family while they are in the program. Housing programs often needed to partner with other assistance programs to increase an individual's ability to find and keep employment.
- Employment was not very stable: nearly 60% of working caregivers changed jobs in the year prior at both two and three years post-exit. Employment patterns were erratic: caregivers did not necessarily experience movement from unemployed to part-time to full-time work nor increases in wages.

Household Income

- Monthly household income increased substantially in the first year following exit. After exit, incomes leveled off and fewer gains were made though losses were not experienced overall (see figure below). The percent of families with little or no income (less than \$500 per month) declined from 42% at entry to 5% one year after exit. The majority (70%) of families' monthly incomes from all sources were still less than \$2,000 even three years after exit. With self-sufficiency income levels in the region typically over \$3,000 per month, the gains these families have made, for the most part, still lag behind what is necessary to adequately support their families. After exit, more families received income support from SSI, Medicaid and child support; many of these benefits were applied for during the programs with case managers' assistance and came through after exit.

Change in household income levels over time: Percent of families with incomes greater than \$1,000 per month

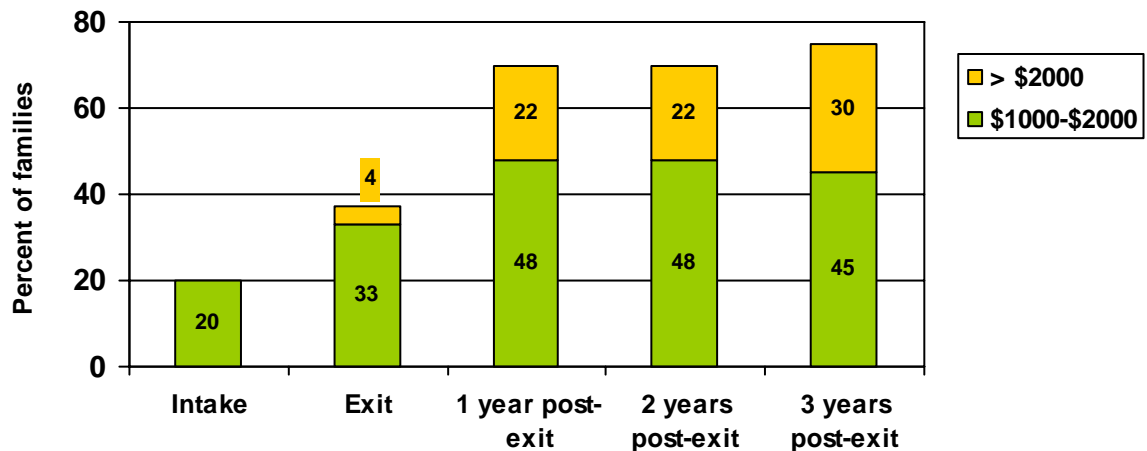


Figure above is for the sub-group of 27 families with data 3 years post-exit.

- Financial strains weighed heavily on families throughout the post-exit period, and potentially put their housing at risk. Each year after exit, over one-fifth of families had made at least one late rent payment in the prior year; more than one-fourth received at least one utility disconnection notice in the prior year; and by three years after exit, 15% had been evicted or told to leave their homes. While families prioritized their budgets to pay rent and bills as well as buy food, many struggled to buy clothes for their children or have money to allow children to participate in activities.

Children’s Issues

As children’s lives became more stable, improvements were seen in many areas, including educational, behavioral, emotional, as well as in the quality of their relationships. (See the January 2007 report examining children’s issues in greater detail.) The most positive change in children’s lives while in transitional housing was increased school stability. The number of school-age children who attended two or more schools within a single school year significantly decreased from 53% at intake to 17% at exit and 9% three years after exit. For children with multiple moves (three or more) per school year, the improvements were even more dramatic, dropping from 17% at entry to near 0% at or after exit:

Number of schools attended by children within the past school year

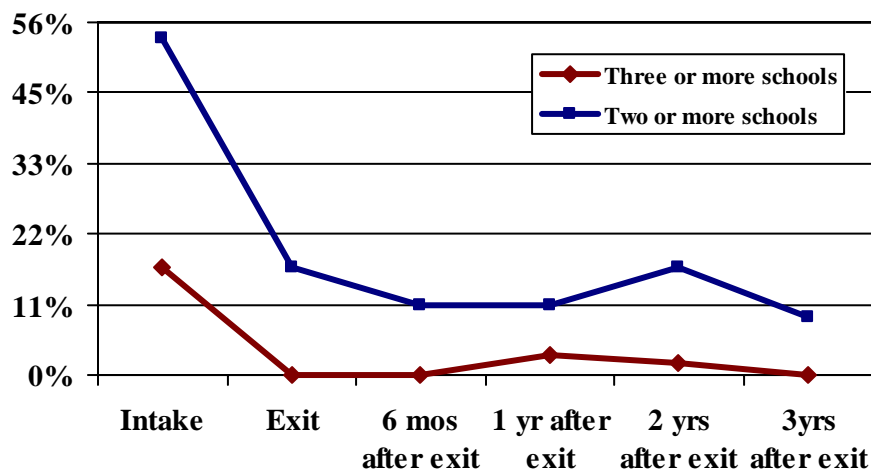


Figure above is for the sub-group of 27 families with data 3 years post-exit.

Rates of involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS) were somewhat lower than expected, possibly because active substance abuse precluded eligibility from most Sound Families programs, and the incidence of substance abuse issues and child neglect are highly correlated. Still, approximately 17% of families had some type of CPS involvement at entry, decreasing steadily after exit from programs. Caregivers and program staff described transitional housing programs as central in helping to ensure parent-child reunification. Several families were reunified with their children as a result of having obtained safe and stable housing. As one mother shared,

“I didn’t get my first child home until I was actually guaranteed transitional housing. That’s what gave the judge the decision to bring her home. If I hadn’t had transitional housing, she would have never come home.”

Caregivers described many ways in which programs were beneficial to their children. They most frequently reported that they were able to provide a sense of routine and security for their children as a result of having stable housing. Many parents also mentioned the community experience as being a positive influence as well as the increased access to services and activities benefited their children's life. Many parents applauded the support they received through their case managers and other program staff such as the children's advocates or children's specialists in some programs. Over half of primary caregivers said their children's behavior improved while in the program:

"(My children) are more situated. Like, my middle child doesn't wet the bed anymore...my oldest doesn't have that worried look on her all of the time and she has made friends. My youngest is growing and blossoming."

"(Our life) is pretty consistent...I've gotten a routine down, we're not struggling to make things happen or worrying about how to survive. We know we're going to have dinner and we're all going to have a bath."

Services Needed and Received

Programs differed in their capacities to provide various services. Some larger programs with a well-established social service delivery model were able to meet families' needs without having to identify many community resources. Smaller or less-established programs and programs with limited common space or few on-site services were more likely to depend on outside community services to help meet the needs of their clients. Despite a program's capacity to address families' needs while in the program, and whether or not families expressed a desire to continue receiving services, families were not as likely to be engaged in services after exit as during the transitional program.

For the most part, the support services needed by families in the programs were delivered. Gaps between services needed and received while in programs most often occurred in the following areas: GED or continuing education, job training, dental care, legal services and help with credit issues. After exit, services were much less frequently received, even if caregivers expressed an ongoing need. Services most needed and *not* received even in the six months following exit were: GED/school classes, job training, parenting and life skills, legal and credit help, health and dental care, and domestic violence services.

That many families continued to need support following exit was evident by the number who contacted their transitional housing case manager for support or assistance. Even as long as three years after exit, 19% had contacted their case manager in the prior year. By three years after exit, only mental health and counseling services were regularly accessed (22% and 19%, respectively).

Many factors may have contributed to the decline in service use following exit. Given that the majority of families moved to new neighborhoods following exit, the lack of familiarity with a new community's resources may have negatively impacted engagement and continuity in services. As families increased their time spent at work and/or in school and job training, it often became more challenging to remain connected to services or initiate new services because of scheduling conflicts, accessibility, or other barriers. Some services may also have taken on a lower priority given that accessing them may have improved the quality of a family's life but they were not necessary for day-to-day functioning. Additionally, without regular check-ins with case managers providing support, guidance and accountability, families may also have been less likely to follow-through on referrals or engage in services.

"It would have been nice to hold the parenting classes near our home. It took a lot to travel back and forth. I ended up stopping. If it were closer, I would have continued."

Life after transitional housing

Quality of Life

Although families interviewed following exit from the program were maintaining permanent housing, their day-to-day lives suggested that housing subsidies were critical as were other income supplements such as food banks to maintaining their stability. Families found it especially difficult to set aside money for emergencies with only half able to do so at most time points. Among those with savings, only one-third had at least \$300 saved one year after exit.

Despite the fact that many families still were living in poverty and reliant on economic subsidies, one year after exit, 81% of families said that life was "somewhat" or "a lot" better than before transitional housing. Caregivers described ways in which life was better than when they were homeless and their situations often felt hopeless:

"Because we got out of my mother's and we now have good structure. Even if we moved out on our own, it wouldn't have been as good because I've grown up a lot and my relationship is better with my child."

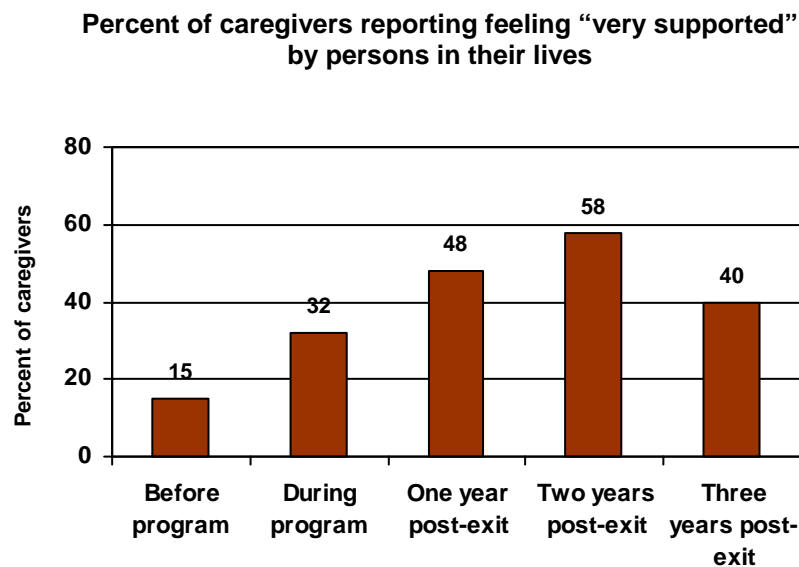
"This program was the first thing that helped us and grew our life. If you don't have a home, you don't like your life... so, the program was the first positive thing for us."

"When I realized [the program] was working, it helped with my mental well-being. To have someone to come to talk to, even if it's not to address an immediate need or concern, you realize how much you've progressed when you can talk to someone about it. It's been extremely helpful. It's done a lot... Without [the case manager] and the program, I would not have gone this far. They offer encouragement that sometimes friends and family don't offer enough of."

Social Support Networks

Families often mentioned that the consistency and quality of the case management was extremely helpful in goal-setting and making positive changes towards realizing their goals. For many families, either continuing to see their case manager, or at least knowing that they could call if they needed anything was an important factor in feeling connected even after exiting the program. Families also became more connected to other residents in the programs and members of their community. Caregivers reported an increasing sense of support from their social support networks while in the programs and after exit, with a decline seen only three years out, the reasons for which are not well understood. It is possible that a combination of factors contributed to the decline, including a cumulative effect of moving, sometimes repeatedly, changing jobs, and losing touch with case managers or others from the program. After a period of gains—sometimes offset by a loss of means-tested benefits—the strain of day-to-day living may also be eroding a sense of “getting ahead” for some families, resulting in their feeling less supported or possibly more isolated. Still, perceived social support remained much higher at that three years out than prior to program involvement.

“[I enjoyed] being part of the community, because once I left it was scary. I had built my own social life and all of our activities. I felt like I was a little safer there.”



Families reflect on their experiences in programs

The majority of families were “very satisfied” with the location of their transitional housing program. Families appreciated having homes that were near to schools, public transportation, and stores given that many families struggled with transportation issues (such as no driver’s license, no vehicle, or no insurance). Additionally, they liked having newer units with easy access to property managers to go to for help when needed. Programs with on-site case management allowed frequent interactions between participants and staff. Issues could often be addressed before they became a crisis. Depending on the location of the program, families had varying degrees of satisfaction with the safety of their neighborhoods. Urban programs had greater challenges with this and often had to put safety measures in place, such as security cameras and additional lights, to increase safety within the complex. Programs that had units further from stores, work and limited transportation, often had to help provide access to vehicles to families. Programs that had play areas for children as well as children’s activities also worked better for families.

“It’s set-up like a home; I appreciate that. You don’t feel like you’re in transition. The units are really beautiful and comfortable. There is really no way to identify what the program is from the building.”

Understanding that those who have actually lived the experience of moving from homelessness to permanent housing hold the best information about what this entails, caregivers were asked to share what they had learned about transitioning out of homelessness. While families acknowledged and appreciated the help provided by programs, they also mentioned that it took work and dedication on their part as well. The following are some of the core elements they believe are needed to help families make the transition out of homelessness:

- Case managers made a tremendous difference. Caregivers’ comments frequently echoed the value of having a case manager available. The housing provided stable ground on which to build a better future, but the support, guidance and encouragement provided by the case manager made the difference. Case managers helped families to create a vision for a better future for themselves and their children. They helped families set goals, break goals down into actionable items, and realize success. Without the vision, support and safety families experienced, many did not think they could have reached the level they did during their time with the program and after.

“The program in the beginning was a little rough...I got lots of help, but I needed to put effort into it myself or it wouldn’t work. The more I used the services, the more I grew up.”

- Families need help accessing better paying jobs. Families wanted access to jobs that paid livable wages, not jobs that left them working harder, yet further behind. They felt that educational programs should be encouraged as well as job training.

- The following is a list of services that families most often mentioned that programs should have available. They also recommended that each family be assessed on an individual basis for which services should be mandatory and which should be optional.
 - ✓ Credit counseling and budgeting guidance
 - ✓ Life skills classes, including cooking, nutrition, cleaning
 - ✓ Information readily available on permanent housing
 - ✓ On-site childcare
 - ✓ A place for kids to play
 - ✓ Job assistance
 - ✓ Food assistance and concrete help
 - ✓ Counselors
 - ✓ Legal assistance
 - ✓ Transportation; assistance with cars
 - ✓ Community meetings

"In terms of my family, the stability of the housing was the key to every other successful step I took forward. For some families, it could be the mental health or some other area of focus. I really appreciated the program. A case manager is key to address the barriers that get in the way...it takes dedication from staff."

- Families also emphasized that after successfully completing the program, help in moving to their permanent homes should be available. Many families did not realize how expensive moving costs would be. They asked for help with trucks available to borrow, deposits on new rentals, and support after they moved as they adjusted their budgets to accommodate expenses like utilities.
- Families need help connecting with resources in their new community.
- Follow-up contact by case managers to check-in on families periodically during the first year after exit would be beneficial.

When families were asked what they would work to change if they were part of a committee to end homelessness in their community, they said they would:

- Increase outreach to struggling families so that they were aware of the resources in their community and how to access them.
- Create more programs skilled at working with families with challenging issues such as chemical dependency. Families with more difficult issues are often screened out of programs and would greatly benefit from this type of support.
- Work to create more affordable housing or access to housing vouchers (or other subsidies). Lack of living wages and affordable housing are at the root of family homelessness.
- Make education a priority and help pave the road to better paying jobs.
- Decrease food insecurity; increase access to food banks.

Conclusion

A significant majority of the homeless families participating in Sound Families were able to make strides, sometimes large, sometimes small, toward stability, economic independence, and improved quality of life. As seen in the longitudinal data, families were able to hold on to most of these gains, though not always easily, in the years following transitional housing. Most families required an ongoing housing subsidy to remain stably housed. Many families remained dependent on access to ongoing services, including intermittent contact with their prior case managers and mental health services, as well as additional economic supports such as child care subsidies, food banks and Medicaid. Their wages remained insufficient to fully support their families and most low-wage jobs lacked benefits. Holding low-wage jobs, often more than one, and ensuring that their children were cared for, including transporting them to childcare or school often without the convenience of a car, left families with little time to pursue the additional education or job training that they desired and that would enable them to secure more stable, higher wage jobs.

For the majority of families served, this initiative was successful in attaining its initial goal of returning homeless families to stable housing situations and increasing income and employments levels. This initiative also furthered local understanding of existing housing and service gaps and how to more effectively serve homeless families. Many aspects worked extremely well and deserve continuation or replication. The Sound Families Initiative was able to achieve success by better coordinating disparate parts of the homeless services system aimed at families, helping agencies to increase their organizational capacity, and creating long-term stability for many families. At the core of this work were four cornerstones of success:

1. Transitional housing more seamlessly linked to permanent housing provided much needed **stable housing** for families to address other issues related to their becoming homeless.
2. Supportive **case management** and other services available through the transitional program helped families to move towards equilibrium while maintaining their housing. Low turnover in case managers and solid training and supervision ensured a high level of support to families.
3. For most families, there was a good **fit** between the level of a family's needs and the service capacity of the transition program. Ensuring this match required adequate and quality up-front assessment of each family's needs.
4. **Partnerships** between service providers and housing owners allowed housing to be linked to services and partnerships with local housing authorities enabled many successful families to secure permanent housing upon exit.

These findings also suggest additional work that is needed to stabilize the lives of homeless families and help them move closer to achieving economic independence. While median hourly wage gains were notable, they remained substantially short of living wages for the Puget Sound

region. Clearly, more effective efforts are needed in the area of workforce development to connect wage earners in families recovering from homelessness to better employment opportunities. For families with greater service needs, we saw that a different program model is necessary to help these families address their often multiple and complex needs without jeopardizing their housing. Services to homeless children, including stronger partnerships with school systems, would also benefit from increased resources in order to interrupt the cycles of intergenerational poverty and homelessness. By continuing to enhance and refine the systems serving homeless families, this region will continue to reduce both the rate of families becoming homeless and the negative impacts homeless episodes have on children and adults alike.

“Back when I was in the program, I never thought I would be where I am. People told me to have hope. It is up to the individual to make the change. I am so appreciative of where I am today.”

Appendix

Race/ethnicity of primary caregivers by county

Race/ethnicity of primary caregiver	Pierce County	King County	Snohomish Co.
Caucasian	53%	38%	70%
Black/African American	26%	37%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	6%	5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4%	3%	5%
Asian/Asian American	3%	3%	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4%	3%	1%
Biracial/multiracial/other	5%	11%	5%
Number of primary caregivers	391	692	390

Additional evaluation reports available at www.soundfamilies.org:

Evaluation of the Sound Families Initiative: Preliminary Findings (2004)

A Closer Look at Homeless Families' Lives During and After Supportive Transitional Housing (2005)

Early Exits: Lessons Learned from Families Asked to Leave Transitional Housing (2006)

Breaking the Cycle: Serving Homeless Children in Supportive Housing Programs (2007)

How are They Faring? Findings on 51 families one year after exiting transitional housing programs (2007)