

# Housing and Recovery through Peer Services (HARPS) program

## Overview

Homelessness is traumatic, cyclical, and puts people at risk for mental health and substance use disorders. Homelessness also interferes with one's ability to receive services, including services for behavioral health conditions, and jeopardizes the chances for successful recovery.

The Housing and Recovery through Peer Services (HARPS) program builds on the successes of the Permanent Options for Recovery-Centered Housing (PORCH) project. PORCH provided consumers with meaningful choice and control of housing and support services, using peer housing specialists. The HARPS project reduces homelessness and supports the recovery and resiliency of individuals with serious mental illness.

## Eligibility requirements

HARPS priority populations:

- Individuals who experience behavioral health disorders (either a mental health disorder, substance use disorder or both) and who demonstrate a medical necessity for inpatient behavioral health services; or
- Individuals who are discharged from or at risk of entering:
  - Psychiatric inpatient settings; or
  - Substance abuse treatment inpatient settings.
- Individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness (broad definition of homeless, couch surfing included).

## Authority

In 2014, the Legislature directed the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to integrate substance use disorder treatment purchasing primarily with managed care contracts administered by behavioral health organizations (BHOs) by April 1,

2016. BHOs developed the means to serve the needs of people with mental health or substance abuse disorders residing within the boundaries of their regional service area.

As part of this effort, the Legislature funded three supportive housing pilot projects (North Sound BHO, Greater Columbia BHO, Great Rivers BHO) to:

- Assist individuals' transition from institutional settings into permanent supportive housing
- Provide the basis for supportive housing services, and
- Provide integration opportunities between substance use treatment services and BHOs.

In 2016, the Legislature allocated an additional \$2 million from the state general funds and \$762,000 of the federal block grant to provide for supportive housing services and bridge subsidies for four more BHOs: King County, Pierce/Optum, Spokane and Salish.

In 2017, the Legislature allocated an additional \$2,762,000 for another HARPS team that will be located in the Thurston-Mason BHO.

## 2017-19 budget

Each team consists of three FTEs (a MHP professional and two certified peer counselors). Total team annual costs: \$190,440.

Housing bridge subsidies are estimated at \$500 per person for three months across all the eight sites. Each region is allocated funds for bridge subsidies. The 'bridge' subsidy may be used for application fees, security deposits, utilities assistance, and rent.

## FY 18 cost and number served

- Total referrals from the state hospitals: 58

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- Housed: 48
  - Receiving supportive housing services: 24
  - Statewide totals:
    - Housed: 1,507 from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018
    - Received/receiving supportive housing services: 546

### **Key partners**

BHOs and their respective local mental health and housing provider agencies.

### **For more information**

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