

Statewide Initiative

# Building Changes

Washington

Building Changes in Washington State seeks to advance more equitable responses to homelessness through an interdisciplinary approach to systemic change that combines collaboration, innovation, evaluation, and advocacy. In June, 2021, Building Changes published “Students Experiencing Homelessness in Washington’s K–12 Public Schools: Trends, Characteristics, and Academic Outcomes, 2015 through 2019”. The third in a series, this report aims to identify key characteristics and outcomes of students experiencing homelessness in Washington state in order to increase knowledge that can lead to more informed decision-making by school administrators, teachers, counselors, and local policymakers. Building Changes used data provided by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction through a data-sharing agreement that provided unsuppressed school-level data on 2,495 public schools and programs in the state’s K–12 system for the school years 2014-15 through 2018-19 (the last full dataset available pre-pandemic). The report analyzes outcomes and trends of students experiencing homelessness across demographics, type of nighttime residence, district prevalence and funding, attendance, suspensions, proficiency in English and Math, 9th grade on-track, dual credit enrollment, and graduation rates. Among their findings, the report notes that students of color experience homelessness at much higher rates, and academic outcomes for all students experiencing homelessness remain well below those of their housed peers. The data report informed Building Changes’ Menu of Strategies, a working collection of recommendations for schools, districts, and community partners to better support students and families experiencing homelessness in Washington State.

In addition to their comprehensive data analysis, Building Changes also publishes Local Data and Outcomes Dashboards. These data visualizations allow users to see and search data at the state level, in addition to school districts, legislative districts, and counties.