

Executive Summary

Each year, agencies funded by United Way of King County submit reports detailing the successes and challenges of serving the King County population. In 2016, 161 agencies submitted reports and the following summarizes responses to the questions asked.

1. Describe any trends, significant changes in outcome population or need for services.

- **Early Learning**

Agencies noted an increase in families of color requesting services and a need for translation services. The need for childcare, preschool, housing, or emergency financial assistance is most requested. Agencies reported an increase in trauma informed care and Autism spectrum diagnoses. Support families in creating school readiness and working with families who have non-traditional job schedules.

- **Ending Homelessness**

The aging of the homeless population, decreasing psychiatric beds in the area, and increasing substance abuse, requires additional focus on health care. Agencies are struggling to find affordable housing options for clients as barriers persist, and they include additional services to fully support clients. In youth homelessness, risk factors include sex trafficking and gang violence and unique approaches necessary.

- **Supporting Youth**

There continues to be a need for additional psychiatric services for youth, particularly because of increased heroin abuse. Helping transient and homeless populations access support remains a priority for agencies. The immigrant and refugee population is increasing in King County. Agencies are moving towards serving youth through school-based programming because of an increased positive impact.

- **Financial Stability**

Agencies have seen an increase in non-white populations across all funding areas in addition to increased demand from immigrant and refugee populations. Housing continues to be prohibitively expensive and clients are accessing other services in order to increase amount of money for housing. Government benefits decreasing has negatively impacted individuals through SNAP and health care.

2. Describe any issues that affected services.

Agencies experienced a number of issues that affected services including: **decreased funding, limited staff to hire and increased rates of turnover, complex needs of clients, and challenging logistics.** In particular, the changes in the federal law around the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Seattle minimum wage will impact the overhead costs for agencies. Additionally, agencies are challenged by the generational poverty and systemic barriers marginalized communities experience and are working to bring together additional resources to support upward mobility.

Overall:

As housing costs rise, individuals and families experience greater rates of homelessness and hunger in King County. With an increasing population of immigrants and refugees, there is an increased need for culturally responsive programming and translation services that can support agency staff that is not being met. The intersection of the four funding areas was demonstrated repeatedly by agencies and there is opportunity for partnership and collaboration or the creation of a pipeline of services for King County residents.

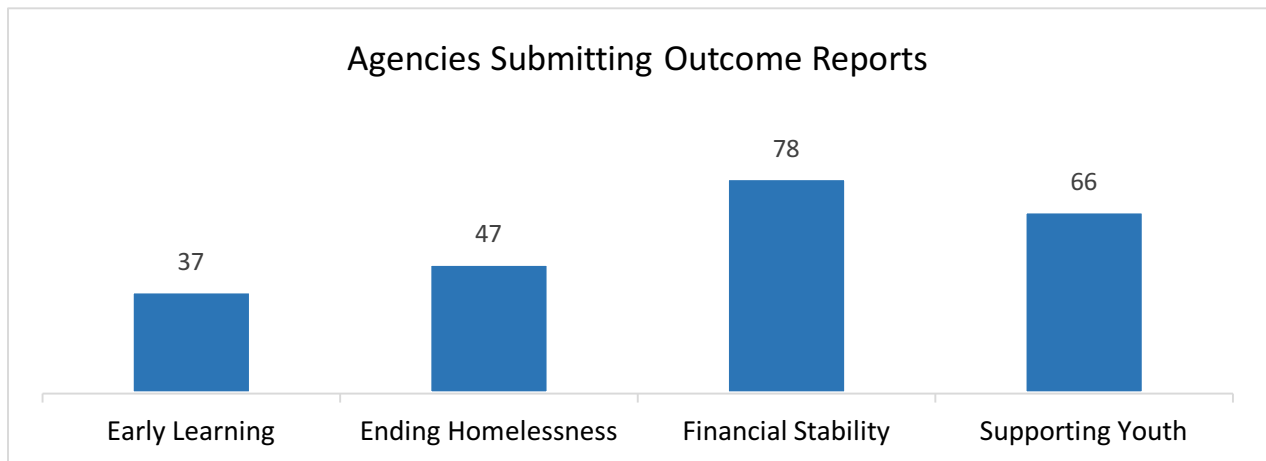
Background and Methodology

Each summer, United Way of King County collects outcome data from grantees who received funds during the previous year. This report aims to summarize the narrative responses of the FY2015-16 outcome data by focusing on themes in answers provided by agencies. The following prompts were given to agencies:

1. Describe any trends, significant changes in outcome population or need for services.
2. Describe any issues that affected services.

To assist with the management of the data, NVivo was used to code the data into themes, which were then aggregated and interpreted. **Agencies received funds under four investment areas: Early Learning, Ending Homelessness, Financial Stability, and Supporting Youth.** A total of 161 agencies submitted qualitative responses in the outcome report. Several agencies wrote reports for multiple investment areas, providing a total of 228 reports. Table 1 shows the number of outcome reports by funding category.

Table 1



Limitations





The wording of the questions overlaps in many ways so agencies often used the same narrative to answer each question. For FY17, it would be worthwhile to consider changing the wording of the questions to limit agencies using the same answers for multiple questions and instead to elicit specific information about the needs of community.

An additional question was asked of agencies: What did you learn this year about the effectiveness of your services, the characteristics of the people you served, and how you might improve future results? Upon analysis however, the answers to this questions did not elicit overall trends.

Results

QUESTION 1: DESCRIBE ANY TRENDS, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN OUTCOME POPULATION OR NEED FOR SERVICES.

EARLY LEARNING TRENDS

			
Diverse Communities Increase in families of color requesting services and need for translation services.	Working with Families Supporting school readiness and non-traditional job schedules.	Complex Mental Health Needs Increase in trauma informed care and Autism spectrum diagnoses.	Accessing Resources Childcare, preschool, housing, or emergency financial assistance most requested.

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



Agencies mention diverse communities with specific cultural needs often and in multiple contexts. For some agencies, staff have found that there are not enough resources to be able to address education inequity for children of color. Other agencies have seen an increase in immigrant families who are unfamiliar with American parenting expectations and require additional support. Across almost all agencies, **there is an increase in families of color requesting services**, mirroring the increasing number of these families in the communities of King County.

The necessity for translation services and staff that are able to communicate in diverse languages is in high demand. While agencies continue to recruit staff that are bilingual, the number of languages spoken by the community is increasing and not all are readily available through paid interpreters. **Although Spanish was the most frequently mentioned language requested, additional languages included Burmese, Kurdish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Nepalese, Dari, Pashtu, and Ukrainian.** Beyond translation services, agencies described a need for culturally-competent interpreters if staff are not able to conduct conversations with clients on their own.

Examples:

- “Every year we see an increase in non-English speaking families in King County – much more than in the other counties we serve.”
- “The feedback from the refugee relocation agencies is that there will continue to be refugees from Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Congo, Burma, and Syria over the next several months/years, increasing the need for early learning services in multiple languages and levels of support.”
- “Many families have barriers in accessing materials/services that meet their cultural needs.”

WORKING WITH FAMILIES



The need for additional family support for caregivers was a common thread throughout agency narratives. Families express to staff challenges around setting boundaries and routines at home in addition to **needing support to build school readiness skills in their children**. The challenge of identifying convenient timing for services was a theme throughout agency narratives but there was no consistent request. Many agencies described **parents working non-traditional job schedules** who were not always able to attend programming, resulting in grandparents or other family members acting as the primary caregiver. The types of timing that were requested included: full day programming for children while parents are at work and morning programming for children whose parents work at night. Additionally, agencies found that more fathers with young children expressed interest in parenting classes and other services.

Examples:

- “Many of our participants were not parented themselves and they are eager for a lot of support.”
- “Another trend that continues each and every year is the need of a family support [because] families continue to seek support from teachers.”
- “There were more referrals of fathers interested in parenting classes.”

COMPLEX MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS



The mental health needs of clients were significant and varied. Many agencies discussed a trend in more children experiencing emotional and behavioral disorders. Additionally, **the number of children who require trauma informed care has increased**, requiring additional support and information for caregivers and specially trained mental health providers. Other diagnoses mentioned as increasing were Deprivation Maltreatment Disorder, delayed language development, and Sensory Processing Disorder. **Most frequently however, agencies are seeing an increasing trend of children diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum**. These mental health needs result in agencies serving clients who require earlier evaluation and specialized services, working with families that need a different type of support, and needing highly trained staff who are prepared to serve this population.

Examples:

- “Our most significant trend [...] is the need to provide information/education [...] to families with children with special needs.”
- “The growing number of children diagnosed with Autism and increasingly early diagnosis of developmental delays and disabilities has created a growing need for parenting support program.”
- “This year we provided more services to children and families with complex needs including mental health, special needs, and trauma informed care.”

ACCESSING RESOURCES



Over the past year, agencies observed parents and families struggling to meet basic needs. The resources mentioned most often as needed were **referrals to childcare or preschool, housing, and emergency financial assistance**. Housing was the most frequently referenced resource that families need support with, as options for low-income families have decreased over the past year. These socioeconomic

challenges create stress for parents and families and impact the parent’s ability to dedicate time and resources they might have needed to towards the early intervention support for their child/children.





Examples:

- “We have seen an increase in requests for assistance in how to access basic services such as food, medical assistance, education, housing, and employment.”
- “The number of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness has increased.”
- “This year we had more clients without any income at all.”

EARLY LEARNING TRENDS SUMMARY:

There continues to be significant need in this community to support families and their young children towards academic success. Providing additional resources, including opportunities to connect families to agencies that can offer additional services, can give families the space to concentrate on their children’s needs.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS TRENDS

			
<p>Health Concerns</p> <p>Aging of homeless population, decreasing psychiatric beds in the area, and increasing substance abuse.</p>	<p>Barriers to Housing</p> <p>Affordable housing options are declining as barriers persist.</p>	<p>Accessing Resources</p> <p>Combining housing support with other services to fully support clients.</p>	<p>Youth Homelessness</p> <p>Risk factors include sex trafficking and gang violence. Unique approaches necessary.</p>

HEALTH CONCERNS



Aging of clients

Across agencies, providers noted the trend of **aging in the King County general homeless population**. With that aging comes increased illness, disability, and in many cases senility and dementia. Agencies have found that **this population has a greater need for in-home care, onsite nursing, or assisted living**, which can present as a challenge because of substance abuse or behavioral challenges.

This trend results in a need for attention to **an integrated, comprehensive health and wellness service for the aging residents of permanent supportive housing** in addition to identifying new ways to bring services to this population. Agency staff are often put in the position of providing care for clients who struggle to independently manage daily living, which has a significant impact on staff. Some providers also referenced an increasing in the need for end-of-life planning for this community.

Examples:

- “We are seeing more senior citizens displaced from housing that was affordable that they have lived in for years. With the huge rent increases, seniors are getting evicted from housing and are left with no place to aside from shelters. [...] No one over 65 years old should ever be allowed to end up on the streets.”

- “Providers are seeing a consistent aging among homeless adults. The average of housing program residents [in our program] is now 54 years old and many clients have the chronic diseases and disabilities usually seen in people as they enter their 60s and 70s.”
- “The vet population is getting older with more physical and medical needs. A lot of these vets have mobility issues.”



Mental health

Mental health challenges are not a new trend in the homeless population and continues to be a complex multi-layered challenge. A small number of agencies noted that one complicating factor in serving this increasing population is the **decreasing number of behavioral health providers throughout the region**. There is a lack of local psychiatric beds and challenges with Western State Hospital have further impacted the ability of agencies to adequately serve this population. Additionally, agencies noted the cuts in non-Medicaid funding to support homeless individuals with mental illness as a continuing challenge.

To navigate some of these challenges, agencies are more likely to partner with other behavioral health providers to offer services, provide on-site mental health support with counselors, and make referrals to outside agencies. They expressed an **increasing trend in the need for supportive housing** for this community.

Examples:

- “Across both our shelter and transitional housing programs, we have seen a rise in clients who need crucial support around their mental health challenges.”
- “We have clients who present with mental health issues, who are not compliant with their medication and [are] therefore unstable and unable to live in an environment with others. Consequently, we find it increasingly challenging to provide accommodation to clients who are not mentally stable.”
- “Mental health has been one of the most prevalent barriers for our shelter clients.”



Substance Use

Substance use and abuse continues to be a trend associated with the homeless population in King County. Agencies referenced seeing an **increase in individuals using methamphetamines and heroin** and a **decrease in the population using crack cocaine**. Some agencies described clients continuing to need chemical dependency support after they stopped receiving other services, resulting in a greater need to connect and support clients to get appropriate treatment. Additionally, there has been a **growing number of clients experiencing co-occurring disorders, requiring both mental health and substance abuse support concurrently**. Some housing agencies are seeing a surge in the number of clients with evictions due to drug-related issues as opposed to non-payment challenges, and more agencies are see clients terminated from housing due to drug use.

Examples:

- “Heroin use continues to be on the rise in our communities with additives causing more severe reactions in overdose and deaths.”
- “The need for detox, treatment, and drug and alcohol free housing is great and seems to be growing.”
- “In the last year we have continued to see an increase in behavior related to substance use to results in a client’s termination from housing. There is a continued need for easy access to chemical dependency treatment in order to assist clients with getting connected to services quicker.”

BARRIERS TO HOUSING



Agencies described that across the region, **affordable housing options and rental vacancies continue to decline**. This trend impacts agencies’ abilities to access and connect clients to affordable housing resources. One suggestion to combat this challenges is to develop rent stability programs in order to give clients market rate stability when landlords will not take public vouchers. Another agency

described focusing on using flexible funds to transition clients off the streets into the highly competitive private market.

In conjunction with the low vacancy rates and lack of affordable housing, agencies described a number of barriers to housing facing the clients they served. Two categories emerged: **barriers to clients getting housed** and **barriers to clients staying housed**. Some obstacles in accessing housing included **criminal history, mental health challenges, chemical dependency, and significant debt**. Some challenges to clients staying housed were **income barriers, little to no work history, and no support systems**.

Examples:

- “As the lack of affordable housing grows, as jobs paying an affordable wage shrink, and as government services dwindle, we continue to see the rapid growth of people who have no homes.”
- “The primary trend we see is an increased number of barriers facing the families we serve. This makes it more difficult to place families without some upfront work, such as paying off past evictions. Currently [our program] has limited funds to do this.”
- “We have seen an increase of clients with significant landlord debt, increased levels of criminal history, increasing levels of mental health challenges, struggling with chemical dependency, and families with limited or no support systems.”

ACCESSING RESOURCES



The needs of the population served within this impact area included more than housing. Agencies identified a variety of services that **clients would benefit from: legal assistance, therapeutic support, utility and rent assistance, and outreach and referral services for job-training**. One positive trend noted by agencies is a decreasing need for support around medical billing and paying for health services, as **more people were able to access health insurance through the Affordable Care Act**. This meant for at least one agency, client services shifted from uninsured individuals to new immigrants and undocumented individuals.

Examples:

- “There is a greater need for combined approaches for clients to be able to access [...] job and life skills development, child and family support, and [...] educational attainment avenues.”
- “We see a need for transitional housing, as many of our residents would benefit from supportive services that address issues to increase parenting skills and help their children.”

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



Youth homelessness continues to be a specialized subset of the homeless population with diverse needs and distinct trends from the rest of the population. Youth serving agencies noted that with **the number of homeless youth in King County staying steady** but only a small number of shelters dedicated to serving young adults, and the lack of available shelter beds continues to be a barrier to youth accessing services. This past year, agencies have seen an increase in risky behaviors from youth, specifically **increased numbers associated with sex trafficking and gangs**.

Reaching this population continue to be challenging, because **youth experience barriers in travel**. Programs using outreach to connect to youth have seen an increased need for services, particularly focusing on case management to improve long-term outcomes.





Examples:

- “[Our program] has observed an increasing number of youth in placement meeting many of the risk factors for trafficking or having a history of trafficking.”
- “We are serving more women who have been involved with high risk gang relations.”

ENDING HOMELESSNESS TRENDS SUMMARY:

The trends in the homeless community are both systems related and connected to the individuals. The challenge of a lack of affordable housing and vacancies persists, while the population continues to experience barriers to housing, in particular substance abuse and mental health challenges. Agencies believe that by offering wrap-around services that include both housing and other resources will improve the outcomes for homeless individuals.

SUPPORTING YOUTH TRENDS

			
<p>Risk Factors</p> <p>Need for additional psychiatric services for youth, increased heroin abuse.</p>	<p>Financial Vulnerability</p> <p>Transient and homeless populations make it challenging to access support.</p>	<p>Culturally Sensitive Programming</p> <p>Increased immigrant and refugee population needing specific supports.</p>	<p>School Based Programming</p> <p>Serving youth through school-based programming has a positive impact.</p>

RISK FACTORS



A number of risk factors were brought up by agencies as trending this year. The most frequently recognized risk factors were mental health challenges. Agencies have seen **a higher need for psychiatric services for youth**, particularly around self-harming behavior and suicide attempts.

Depression, anxiety, trauma, and identity issues were also mentioned as a trend in mental health challenges.

Substance abuse issues were also theme in many agencies responses, however besides **increased heroin abuse**, no other specific drugs were identified as being on the rise within the youth community.

Other risk factors referenced by agencies included the commercially organized sex trade, prostitution, cyberbullying, and co-occurring disorders. Although one program noted that gun/gang violence has increased in some districts, another program noted that the risk of male youth being involved with gangs seems to have decreased.

Examples:

- “We continue to see a number of youth who have been referred into our groups for self-harming behavior. Many of our youth have admitted to cutting or hurting themselves to deal with other stressors in their lives including bullying, anxiety, and depression.”
- “We are noticing many youth presenting with symptoms of depression, anxiety, gender and sexual identity issues, self-harming behaviors, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse issues. We continue to see a growth in the number of youth we are serving with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues.”
- “We are seeing higher number of youth that are participating in commercially organized sex trade or prostitution.”

FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY



Housing and Homelessness

Many agencies referenced the **increasing number of youth they are working with who are homeless or have transient living situations**. This trend presents a challenge to agencies as families and youth are priced out of the Seattle area and move into the suburbs, making it more difficult for them to access transportation to get to programming and find the time to participate. Another impact of this trend is, for at least one program, **youth become ineligible for services they had previously accessed when they leave the Seattle boundary to seek affordable housing**. Programs are working on ways to offset these challenges by **finding programming space that is more accessible to youth** and collaborating with King County Housing Authority to connect to youth where they are.

Examples:

- “[Our program] is seeing increases in youth and young adult homelessness. There are limited housing resources for youth and young adults in South King County.”
- “Housing instability has become a more significant issue than in past years. With rental prices getting so high, many families we work with are being displaced and must move out of the city. More students are couch surfing, commuting from further away to get to school and having to move multiple times during the school year.”

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING



The youth being served by these agencies are incredibly diverse. Ethnic diversity trended towards **youth of color, specifically African-American and Hispanic**, however some agencies also saw increased referrals from Pacific Islander, West African, and Middle Eastern youth. A number of agencies also referenced **an increase in immigrant and refugee youth**, who come with unique needs. Some of those needs included support around transfer of the schooling from other countries, residential and legal status when working towards college/higher education, processing traumatic experiences from their homeland, and deportation of family from the United States.

Agencies respond to this trend of increasing diversity in the region through a number of ways including **staff diversity training, outreach to underserved communities, and including cultural identity in their programming**.

Examples:

- “There have been more refugees and immigrants moving into South King County as opposed to Seattle itself.”
- “Nearly all the youth we serve are children of color [...] and they face significant challenges.”

SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMMING



The need for additional services for youth in school has increased over the past year. The trend comes from both the agencies and the schools. There has been increasing demand from schools to partner with youth development agencies and provide more enrichment opportunities within the school. Additionally, **agencies have seen that youth are better engaged in services when served at the school** and that the general population of students also takes advantages of opportunities. One agency noted that holding

programming in the school gives youth a safe place outside of the consistent violent crime in their neighborhood where they can access technology, academic, and social support. Schools are placing a larger emphasis on social-emotional learning within schools and many **agencies described how they are working to integrate more social emotional support into their programs.**




Examples:

- “[Our program] has observed that youth are better engaged in mental health services when referred by their school and are able to be seen at the school. [...] Because youth are able to decide when they enroll in services, the support [of] schools leads to increased engagement.”
- “Since the staff have been embedded in the school, they have had more contact with students who would not typically self-select to participate in the program.”
- “We [...] have experienced increased requests from area schools that are eager to partner with us in offering school-based services to their students.”


SUPPORTING YOUTH TRENDS SUMMARY:

The trends for youth include a need for culturally sensitive programming and acknowledgment of the challenges to youth in focusing on their futures when they have an unsteady foundation, whether through a lack of housing or no financial stability. United Way of King County has an opportunity to support agencies that are trying to partner with schools, particularly in communities with high need.

FINANCIAL STABILITY TRENDS

		
<p>Demographics¹ Increase in non-white populations across areas. Demand from immigrant and refugee populations.</p>	<p>Housing and Homelessness Clients access other services in order to increase amount of money for housing.</p>	<p>Government Assistance Government benefits decreasing has negatively impacted individuals through SNAP and health care.</p>

DEMOGRAPHICS

 Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Agencies mentioned that the populations served continue to be diverse but they see a **disproportional representation of women of color and children of color.** Immigrant and refugee populations continue to increasingly access services for domestic violence and sexual assault. **The ethnic groups mentioned included: Filipino, Burmese, Somali, Afghani, Syrian, Lebanese, and Iraqi.** One agency that serves

¹ Because of the breadth of agencies funded through Financial Stability, demographic trends were examined within abridged Investment Areas.

male survivors of domestic violence noted that it has seen an increased demand for services focused on gender specific services and groups.

Older Adults and Caregivers

Among the older adults served by agencies, there is a trend of **a more diverse mix of backgrounds requesting services**. Agencies are seeing fewer Russian older adults and more from Iraq, Syria, Congo, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Vietnam. Although all ages of this population were referenced as having increased need, adults between the ages of 50-65 were more frequently targeted for early intervention services and support around health planning. **Caregivers continue to be primarily female individuals** however there was an increasing trend of caregivers taking care of more than one person (e.g. parent and spouse).

Basic Food Needs

The increase of the Hispanic population using foodbanks was noted by a number of agencies, particularly people of Cuban, Ecuadorian, and Chilean nationalities. Additionally, agencies mentioned growth in the Asian population and that they are seeing more refugees. **The largest demographic trend noted though was the aging of the population relying on Food Banks and food distribution services**. To address this trend, some agencies are piloting additional home delivery programs, while others have created a “Senior Hour” to help ease any stigma that seniors feel when receiving assistance at the same time as families.

Health Care Access and Independent Living

There were no trends that could be extrapolated across multiple agencies within this investment area. However, some of the trends individual agencies mentioned are an increase in Asian American clients who need culturally sensitive services, non-native English speakers being challenging to diagnose because of limited English proficiency, and an increase in older adults with developmental disabilities with complex needs.

Access to Support and Services

Increasing numbers of newly arriving refugees were noted from a number of agencies. Refugees from Central America were referenced in addition to Iraq, Somalia, Burma, Bhutan, and Ukraine. This trend resulted in additional need for linguistic services specific to the following languages: Somali, Amharic, Oromo, and Tigrinya. **Agencies also saw a greater need for cultural inclusivity in their programming**, for example, providing the prompts for interpretation in languages other than English and ensuring that staff can provide culturally inclusive services.

Job Readiness

Job Readiness programs saw an increase in students of color, immigrants, and refugees. These populations are disproportionately represented in needing workforce development programs and financial planning services. Geographically, programs noted that **South King County has fewer employment programs and career navigation sites, while the need is significant**.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS



Across all investment areas, agencies talked about seeing an increase of individuals struggling because of the lack of affordable housing and an increase in the homeless population they are serving. As rent continues to rise, individuals have had to make choices about how to spend income, and food banks have seen more homeless individuals and low-income workers choosing to get food from the food bank in order to pay for rent. Several food banks referenced emergency food bags and non-cook food supplements for clients

experiencing homelessness with **one agency seeing an increase of over 400% in individuals requesting ready-to-eat items.**

Accessing transitional housing for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors continues to be a trend, oftentimes leaving **individuals with a choice between a harmful relationship and homelessness.** Agencies have responded by building relationships with more homeless shelters and housing programs. For older adults and seniors, agencies noted that more **elderly people are in need of the direct services that will help them stay in their housing** or move into permanent housing. For many of these seniors, substance abuse and mental health challenges make supporting their housing stability increasingly challenging.

Examples:

- “Housing continues to be a major issue for families we serve. The availability of affordable housing continues to be a problem and some of the clients we serve are homeless or couch surf with families and friends.”
- “We [...] have an increase of homeless people coming to get Emergency Feeding Program bags. When we ask them how they cook the food, some say they use friend’s kitchens where they sleep on the couch and others cook over fires where they camp.”

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



Many agencies noted changes in government benefits that negatively impacted their clients in the past year. One significant trend that many agencies noted was around the change in SNAP where **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents lost eligibility for SNAP benefits** unless they met certain exemptions. A result of this change was an upswing in individuals needing groceries and meals who hadn’t in the past, as they had previously received enough benefits to purchase their own meals. A trend within the health care agencies was that although the Affordable Care Act had provided many individuals with dental insurance, so few dentists are accepting the insurance which means that **individuals are still experiencing challenges with access to health care.** This was also noted by one agency working with younger low-income seniors who needed support finding affordable health plans through Medicaid.





Examples:

- “We live in a time when state benefits are reduced, creating even more vulnerability.”
- “The cut to King County residents in the SNAP Benefits (food stamps) if they were “able bodied without dependents” brought in more homeless and families that we hadn’t seen since 2009—who had been [previously] able to access SNAP.”


FINANCIAL STABILITY TRENDS SUMMARY:

The trends of the agencies funded through financial stability emphasized the diversity of the populations being reached and the wide variety of needs that each individuals required. Agencies funded through financial stability are unique because of the breadth of needs they are reaching, but that provides an opportunity to connect them and create opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

QUESTION 2: DESCRIBE ANY ISSUES THAT AFFECTED SERVICES.

			
<p>Funding</p> <p>Law changes impact agency funding and certain donations are decreasing.</p>	<p>Staffing</p> <p>Hiring qualified staff is challenging, turnover is high and capacity is limited.</p>	<p>Barriers and Complex Needs</p> <p>Clients require a mix of services to combat generational challenges in King County.</p>	<p>Logistics</p> <p>Data collection continues to be limited by technology and capacity of staff, while space for programming and transportation are limited by what is available.</p>

FUNDING

 Although non-profits often exist in an uncertain funding environment, agencies overwhelmingly referenced funding challenges as impacting their ability to serve populations at the same level. **Funding challenges were not only monetary, but also related to donations.** Agencies mentioned that certain items are not being donated at the level they have in the past, forcing agencies to use funding to purchase items. At least one agency expressed the need for funding related to interpretation costs due to changing demographics of the population being served.

Agencies referenced having to reduce staff numbers within the past year and preparing to scale back in the future. **Several agencies acknowledged the impact which law changes will have on their ability to pay staff, specifically the federal law changes in the Fair Labor Standards Act and the minimum wage increase in Seattle.** The shift in United Way of King County funding strategies will affect services and agencies are responding in different ways. Some agencies are trying to improve individual donor strategies; others are trying to reorganize the programming to fit within the new United Way of King County strategies.

Examples:

- “It is difficult to find sufficient resources to allow us to allow us to hire enough staff and therapists and prove enough training. As an agency we are committed to implemented Evidenced Based Practices—therapies that have been thoroughly researched and have data that supports their effectiveness, but it is difficult to find the resources to train and to sustain these practices.”
- “Although our donation drives continue to be very successful, the demand for specific items such as diapers, wipes, socks and underwear far outstrips the amount donated. Since we strive to ensure that these essential items are available to clients, we often need to purchase them in order to ensure that they are in stock.”
- “[Our] biggest and most common issue we face at [our program] is lack of funding, Over the past year, we have seen a significant decrease in funding, leading us to look to small grants to fulfill the needs of the program, which has been challenging with a small program like ours.”

STAFFING



Staffing challenges described by agencies were interconnected, but can be split into three different areas: hiring, turnover, and capacity. Although staff were also described as pivotal to being able to serve these populations, the challenges were wide-spread throughout agencies.

Hiring- Hiring qualified staff that meet the needs of agencies was particularly challenging this year. One agency noted that the qualified applicant pool this year was smaller than before, requiring more efforts to find new staff. In particular, finding staff with certifications was challenging, specifically in mental health, chemical dependency, and early childhood education. **Hiring staff that can meet the diverse language needs of the King County community also continues to be difficult.** Programs identified a need for additional staff able to speak languages of their clients and translate materials to languages outside of English and Spanish.

Turnover- Staffing turnover was seen across all levels of organizations: entry level positions, management positions, and leadership positions. Those challenges took additional staff time to hire and train new staff, put additional pressure on staff in agencies, and caused a break in continuity with clients. Some of the reasons agencies believe they experienced such high turnover this year included entry level low wages in the human services field, student loan debt of new hires, and a lack of supervisory capacity for staff to try and retain them.

Capacity- Most agencies receiving United Way of King County funding continue to have significant interest, and a limited staff capacity impacts their ability to serve the number of individuals who would qualify for services. **Capacity challenges are especially challenging at agencies that use case management, as outcomes are often tied to the amount of time spent with clients and the follow up that is necessary.** Some agencies have chosen to navigate this challenge by increasing the number of volunteer-driven services they provide or creating on-call positions.

Examples:

- “It is a challenge to meet the needs of the community in a culturally relevant/sensitive way. We desire to recruit staff that mirror our population of clients, but this is often difficult to accomplish.”
- “This reporting period, we experienced a large turnover in staff. In addition, the case managers were new to their positions and just introduced to the United Way reporting process. We were able to work through these shortcomings by collaborating with one another and supporting each other through the process. While it was a challenging transition, the case managers were able to quickly learn the process of reporting and significant of measuring our outcomes and achievements.”
- “Our biggest challenge is staff capacity. Each of our [staff] has a full case load of [clients] needing their constant time and attention. In order to ensure the resources to which we refer our clients are effective, we follow up with clients as well as attend meetings or court hearings with them. Although this approach is extremely effective in ensuring people have access to services and support, it takes time and energy. We are currently grappling with how to refer people to other agencies for their ongoing support due to our staff being at full capacity in their caseloads.”

BARRIERS AND COMPLEX NEEDS



The complex and varied needs of clients continue to be challenging for agencies to address and can considerably slow the progress towards meeting outcomes. **Providing supportive services to communities that have experienced generational poverty requires agencies to bring together resources, as clients often need support around more than just one issue.** Some of the intersecting needs that

agencies mentioned include housing stability, chemical dependency, mental health, education, employment, financial services, food security, legal support, and parenting skills.

Examples:

- “Some of the youth face severe barriers that sometimes fall outside of their/our control that limit or put a halt to the projected progress or achievement of their intended goals.”
- “Many of the parents served were not only struggling with a lack of parenting skills, many also faced joblessness, poor economic conditions, lack of consistent/reliable transportation, lack of food, and/or multi-system involvement. All of these factors, at any given time, can create difficulty in our client’s ability to consistently participate in services.”

LOGISTICS



Data collection

Collecting data was referenced by a number of agencies as an ongoing challenge in providing services. A number of database systems were mentioned as not quite meeting the needs of agencies both for tracking information and for reporting to funders. Additionally, the expansion of programming for some agencies has made collecting data increasingly challenging, because of the **additional time needed to gather the demographic information** and the fact that some multi-site agencies don’t have consistent assessments.

Examples:

- “Due to the complicated immigrant and refugee status of program clients, confidentiality is a valid concern which affects the extent of assistance they are willing to receive. Patience and understanding are required in working with immigrants, refugees and people with unknown status because of their reluctance in giving out personal information. [...] It is difficult to gather and track the demographic information of clients and further effort is thus required.”
- “Data collection continues to be fraught with challenges. We collect baseline scores faithfully and [staff] continue to struggle with administering measures every 6 months. [...] Our usual processes for reminding staff to do measures failed us and we do not have sufficient data to demonstrate our successes.”
- “A significant challenge during this grant period has been managing the [...] expansion. The scope of this expansion has meant a sharp increase in data management and a tremendous amount of staff time.”



Physical Space for Programming

With increasing rent costs across King County, agencies are facing a lack of space without a lot of options. For some agencies, the lack of space either results in tight interactions with clients or a constraint that effectively sets the number of clients served. The most frequently mentioned space challenge is with school based programs. As more programs are moving towards offering school-based programs, there is increased competition between agencies for the limited space in schools. Additionally, **Seattle Public Schools has begun to reclaim school spaces that had previously been dedicated for providers.** Agencies also mentioned wanting more outdoor space for recreation and growing.

Examples:

- “One major challenge this year is the space issues in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Every year, SPS’s donation of in-kind rent to us amounts to over \$200,000. We are concerned about the costs to rent space in the community, especially because this region has a booming real estate market with extremely high prices.”

- “Our challenge continues to be [...] space issues that [...] keep us from expanding and serving more children and youth. The demand is there.”



Transportation

Client access to both affordable and reliable transportation was a significant challenge for agencies this year. As mentioned earlier, families are moving out of the City of Seattle, requiring some agencies to travel to clients who live farther away or provide transportation to clients. A number of agencies are **offering bus ticket and shuttle programs** to try and offset challenges, but even with that additional support, there continue to be challenges. One example provided was that for clients who are English Language Learners, even purchasing the ticket on the light rail is a barrier to attendance in programming. One agency noted that in rural King County, the transportation barrier is an increasing challenge because individuals have to travel outside of their home community to get services when they are lacking in rural areas, but can't access the transportation necessary to leave.

Examples:

- “We have found a growing frustration among members regarding lack of transportation assistance and resources. Though we offer shuttle and bus ticket programs, it is not enough.”
- “families who sought our services were facing multiple barriers that made it difficult for them to be consistent in their attendance. Clients faced homelessness, which often left them in different areas without easy access to transportation. Our program has been able to provide bus tickets to allow them to continue to participate.”
- “One key challenge was transportation. Some of the schools do not provide an after school activity bus, or have requirements that not all students can meet in order to ride the bus. Additionally, there are areas that do not have public transportation nearby, making it challenging for some students to get home if they stay after school.”