

RCW 43.330.723 Youth and young adults exiting publicly funded system of care—Flexible funding. (1) The office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs, in coordination with the department of children, youth, and families, shall administer flexible funding, subject to the amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, to support persons under the age of 25 exiting publicly funded systems of care that need discrete support or funding to secure safe housing. The flexible funding provided under this section may be provided for immediate needs of the person. A person may receive support under this section more than once. Uses of the flexible funding provided under this section may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Car repair or other transportation assistance;
(b) Rental application fees, a security deposit, or short-term rental assistance; or
(c) Other uses that will help support the person's housing stability, education, or employment, or meet immediate basic needs.
(2) The flexible funding provided under this section may be given to:

(a) Persons under the age of 25;
(b) Community-based providers, assisting persons under the age of 25 in planning for discharge and successfully discharging from a publicly funded system of care into safe and stable housing; and
(c) Individuals or entities, including landlords, providing safe housing or other housing-related support for persons under the age of 25.

(3) The office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs shall make training available to publicly funded systems of care and other professionals working with youth exiting publicly funded systems of care on how to access the flexible funds created under this section and best practices to divert youth from homelessness.

(4) For purposes of this section, "publicly funded system of care" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 43.330.720. [2022 c 137 § 3.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 137: "(1) The legislature finds that young people discharging from publicly funded systems of care are at increased risk of homelessness. Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness face traumatic events at a higher rate than their peers who have stable housing. Homelessness has long-term impacts on brain development and well-being and creates barriers to education and employment.

(2) RCW 43.330.720 establishes a goal that any unaccompanied youth discharged from a publicly funded system of care in our state will be discharged into safe and stable housing. The office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs and the department of children, youth, and families published the improving stability for youth exiting systems of care report in 2020 outlining steps to achieve this goal. These steps provide a multipronged approach to ensure youth exit publicly funded systems of care into safe and stable housing, including:

(a) System-level support while youth are in the custody of publicly funded systems of care to ensure effective transition from care;

(b) Community-level connections and services to provide support when youth transition back to the community; and

(c) Resources to secure and maintain stable housing.

(3) The legislature intends to implement community services, system response, and flexible resources to support the goal established under RCW 43.330.720 that youth discharged from publicly funded systems of care are discharged into safe and stable housing with the appropriate supports in place to provide a strong footing."
[2022 c 137 § 1.]