Student and Family Stability Initiative Year One Evaluation Report

Prepared for the King County Housing Authority & Highline Public Schools

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GEO EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Cover Photo

Jessica and Blakely Tossey (successfully re-housed
clients of SFSI) walk along Kent-Des Moines Road. The
busy highway does not have sidewalks so Jessica wears
a bright-colored sweatshirt.

Their story is available at:
http://kuow.org/post/portrait-homeless-family-17-months-25-moves

Photo courtesy of KUOW Photo and Isolde Raftery

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Background

Rapid re-housing: an emerging best practice to reducing homelessness. The essence of a rapid re-housing approach is to move homeless individuals and families into housing as quickly as possible (typically 30-60 days from when the family becomes homeless) by providing short-term rental assistance for housing plus support services and case management for clients. The quickness with which individuals and families are housed is often a result of removing barriers and conventional eligibility restrictions, which may otherwise impede the swift delivery of assistance.

In 2013, the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) launched the Student and Family Stability Initiative (SFSI) rapid re-housing program. SFSI is a collaborative effort between KCHA, Highline Public Schools (HPS), and Neighborhood House (NH). KCHA provides most of the funding and coordination; HSP provides school-based counselors and District office staff who promote and explain the program in the schools, identify families who might qualify, and encourage them to apply; NH conducts further phone and in-person screenings and accepts qualified families which they then assist with housing and employment needs. All major partners and the program's evaluators (Geo Education & Research (Geo)) meet regularly and interact frequently to refine processes and to review outcomes.

Need for SFSI

Over the past five years, the number of homeless students in HPS has increased nearly 13% per year. This has a negative impact on students and schools alike. Homeless students in HPS are more likely to miss or be tardy for school. They also experience instability in their lives that can impede academic and emotional growth. Homelessness is costly to schools, as well. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987

Homeless Students in Highline Public Schools
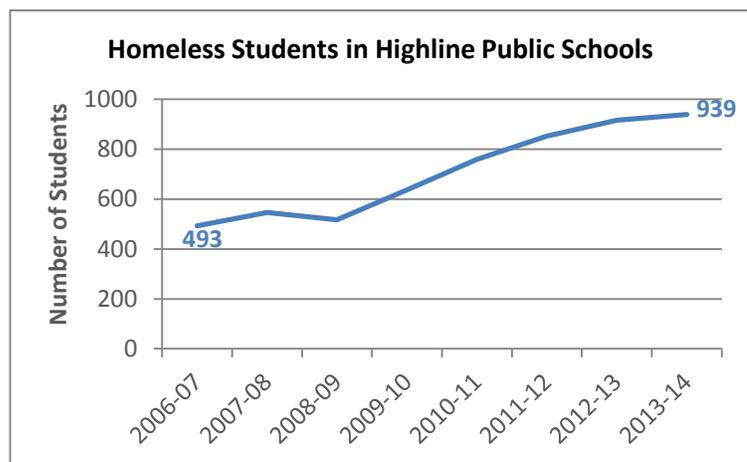
(MV) requires school districts to provide, among other services, free transportation to and from school for homeless students.[1] These transportation costs are substantial for HPS, reaching $846,157 in the

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[1] McKinney-Vento is a federal law that dictates the services that school districts must to provide to homeless students, assuming that the state in which the district is located accepts federal funds

2013-2014 school year and $787,600 in the 2012-13 school year. The potential savings to be realized through reducing these transportation costs were one primary driver behind creating SFSI. The corresponding savings could then be redirected back to the classroom to be spent on education.

Student and Family Stability Initiative Highlights

SFSI is designed to:

- Work with HPS staff to identify and refer homeless families in need of housing to the program;

- Return homeless families in the HPS district into housing as quickly as possible by providing housing search, moving expenses, and short-term rental assistance;

- Provide case management services and connections to community resources;

- Provide Employment Navigation services that assist adult family members to find and maintain employment opportunities. and

- Empower families toward self-sufficiency so that they can sustain housing at the conclusion of funding provided by SFSI.

Fifteen of the district's 18 elementary schools had at least one family enrolled in SFSI by the end of Year One (September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014). During Year One, 52 families enrolled in SFSI, 42 began a housing search, and 23 signed leases.

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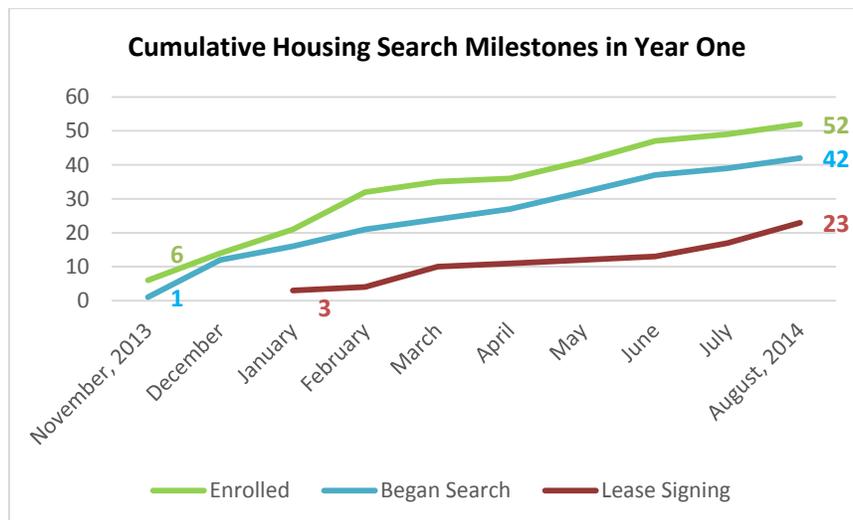
Family Profile

When Karen and her family enrolled in SFSI, the four of them were living doubled up (sharing one room) with Karen's sister in a very temporary situation. Her sister didn't have enough room for her own family, so she needed Karen and her family to leave as quickly as possible. Karen was working as a part-time health care aid but knew the hours she worked would not be enough to stabilize her family. Karen and a Neighborhood House case manager therefore began to work on finding Karen full-time work. Working with her employment specialist, Karen was first able to obtain a second part-time job and then a short time later she was offered a full-time schedule at the first job.

Karen found an apartment that was perfect for her and her family after working with a Neighborhood House case manager for two months. A barrier that prevented Karen and her family from moving into this apartment, however, was Karen's poor rental history. The Neighborhood House case manager persuaded the landlord to approve Karen's rental application and accept from Karen a larger security deposit (provided by SFSI).

After receiving 3.5 months of rental assistance, Karen has been able to pay her own rent, is still in her same apartment, and is working full-time. Karen is also taking classes to update her skills and increase her income. Her children are both very happy where they live and are very engaged in school.

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Student and Family Stability Initiative Description

Intake and screening for SFSI consists of multiple steps. First, a school-based counselor refers families to the HPS McKinney-Vento Liaison.[2] Upon referral, families are screened by the McKinney-Vento Designee and referred to KCHA for baseline Federal Section 8 eligibility screening. Clients are then referred to NH, which conducts two rounds of screening (first by phone and second in-person). NH then enrolls eligible families. **The multiple phases of screening carried about by HPS, KCHA, and NH maximize the prospect that enrolled families are able to continue for rent beyond the family's receipt of rental support.**

Upon enrollment, families are eligible for housing-related support that includes move-in assistance (housing search, landlord negotiations, financial assistance with application fees, security deposits, and

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[2] The federal McKinney-Vento law dictates that school districts dedicate a "McKinney-Vento designee" to serve homeless students. HPS has a McKinney-Vento Designee at each elementary school, and these staff members were pro-active in encouraging eligible families to apply. In many cases, MV staff members were already familiar with potentially eligible families. In other cases, school-based counselors referred families to the MV Designee for initial screening.

moving expenses), support to address issues with past rental/credit history that present current barriers to housing (e.g., past due rent, evictions, overdue utility bills), and three months of rental and utility payment assistance with potential extensions of assistance up to six months.

During the screening and enrollment process, adult family members also complete an employability assessment form. Using these questions as diagnostic tools, NH case managers create step-by-step action plans specifically tailored to each family to help SFSI clients move toward achieving steady employment. Parents who need training and/or employment assistance receive it. Many found new jobs. Quarterly follow-up calls to parents will assess both job and housing stability for up to one year after the completion of SFSI.

Evaluation Questions and Results from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014

This report examines the process and outcomes of SFSI's Year One. The evaluation answers five central questions developed during the program design phase to identify successful outcomes from the two year pilot:

1. *During Year One, how closely did the program's implementation align with the rapid re-housing component and other services initially proposed by KCHA?*

    SFSI was implemented with a very high level of fidelity to its proposed model in Year One. KCHA successfully engaged many partners and stakeholders in SFSI to identify all facets of needs and provided the expertise and resources required to address them. KCHA staff kept all partners informed, engaged and working collaboratively. When challenges arose, the partners were able to address them quickly and effectively in order to keep the process working smoothly and to deal with unforeseen events.

    SFSI's design meets and exceeds the three elements of a rapid re-housing program which the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of HUD, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have collaboratively identified as "core elements"[3]. These elements are:

    1. Housing Identification;

    2. Financial Assistance with Rent and Move-In Costs; and

    3. Housing Case Management and Services.

    Employment navigation services, add a fourth element to these three core elements, ultimately increasing the odds that a family will be able to afford their housing costs once SFSI subsidies end.

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[3] National Alliance to End Homelessness. Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing. 2014. Accessed: http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/RRH.pdf.

2. *To what extent did SFSI achieve its objective to provide homeless families with safe, stable housing, and how "rapidly" was this housing situation achieved?*

SFSI housed 23 families during its first year; the median number of days from referral to enrollment was 26 days; from enrollment to housing it was 64 days. Average numbers of days were higher. For this sample size, the medians are more indicative of the trends.

STUDENT AND FAMILY STABILITY INITIATIVE PRIMARY OUTCOMES OF INTEREST IN YEAR ONE

Outcome	#
Families referred to NH after preliminary screen by MV Designee	86
Families screened out after NH screening	34
Families ultimately enrolled in SFSI	52
Families that began a housing search	42
Families housed during the pilot year	23
Families successfully exiting SFSI during the pilot year	7

RAPIDITY OF STUDENT AND FAMILY STABILITY INITIATIVE MILESTONES DURING YEAR ONE

Milestone	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Number of days from referral to enrollment (n=52)	26	28	15
Number of days from enrollment to housing (n=23)	64	99	69
Number of days from referral to housing (n=23)	105	131	73

3. *What impact did SFSI have on elementary students, as measured by school attendance and tardiness, whose families were housed through SFSI?*

Based on the number of students housed (n=30) and in the absence of district-wide student achievement tests administered to student pre- and post-housing, **no school-related impacts for SFSI were identified in Year One**. In the future we hope to review more (and more detailed) data from the district and to have more students in the cohort so that we can at least see impacts on attendance.

4. *To what magnitude did SFSI decrease HPS' transportation costs for students housed through SFSI? How did this decrease in transportation costs compare to SFSI costs for housing homeless families?*

The program allowed HPS to avoid MV-related taxi cab transportation costs totaling $81,000 for the five families housed who used taxi cabs. These avoided transportation costs, compared to program

costs[4], translate to nearly $30,000 in net savings for the five families housed due to reduced taxi costs by housing students closer to school and eliminating the need to travel to and from school using district funds for taxi service.

5. *What recommendations emerge from Year One that can inform and improve processes and outcomes in SFSI's second year?*

    Expanded and closer coordination between NH case managers and school counselors can potentially connect harder-to-reach populations (e.g., families that are literally homeless or fleeing domestic violence situations) with SFSI resources.

    If SFSI scales up (increasing the number of schools and families served increases significantly), the client load for NH case managers may limit the number of families that can be served unless more staff are hired. Scaling up without more case managers or without staggering the work of case managers (e.g., focusing on assessment during one time period and on leasing during another) may impact the rapidity with which case managers are able to serve clients and interact with school counselors.

    Monthly stakeholder meetings were critical to SFSI's success throughout Year One. Continuing these from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015 (Year Two) is important. They allow partners to hear from each other about typical and challenging client situations and solutions, to review trends in the data being collected and analyzed (KCHA also provides up-to-date trends on a website that partners can view and interact with), and to discuss ways to improve the program.

Recommendations

In order to strengthen evaluation methods, Geo proposes the following recommendations for activities in Year Two:

- **Continue working with HPS to measure SFSI's impact on student outcomes.** Both student achievement data and micro-level attendance and tardiness data have the potential to reveal meaningful program impacts over time.

- **Encourage HPS to develop a system for collecting and analyzing taxi cab cost data** so these data can be leveraged for evaluation purposes and as a diagnostic tool to identify families with high transportation costs for potential SFSI enrollment. This can test the program's intended outcome of producing cost savings for HPS and allowing funds to be redirected to the classroom.

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[4] These include direct assistance to clients for housing, utilities, and associated move-in costs plus staffing costs for Neighborhood House.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid Re-Housing: an Emerging and Evolving Approach to Homelessness

King County Housing Authority's (KCHA) Student and Family Stability Initiative (SFSI) represents an innovative addition to the growing number of housing programs based on a rapid re-housing theory of action. The essence of a rapid re-housing approach is to move homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible (typically 30-60 days from when the family becomes homeless) by providing short-term rental assistance for housing plus support services and case management for clients. The quickness with which individuals and families are housed is often a result of removing barriers and conventional eligibility restrictions which may otherwise impede housing placement. Rapid re-housing programs are designed to return homeless families to stable housing and support income attainment to sustain housing once the rental subsidies end.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched a rapid re-housing demonstration project in 2008 through which $25 million was distributed to 23 communities in the United States; the following year, Congress earmarked $1.5 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing program (HPRP). One of the projects partly funded through HPRP was Chicago's Student Family Support Services Initiative, an intensive case management and housing assistance rapid re-housing program developed by the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services in partnership with Chicago Public Schools. **Chicago's rapid re-housing model of leveraging program service in partnership with public schools provided a blueprint and valuable lessons for the creation and implementation of KCHA's SFSI's rapid re-housing program.**

In 2013 the City of Seattle and King County decided to pilot a rapid re-housing program. The pilot program, Rapid Re-Housing for Families, was designed around the conventional rapid re-housing model of providing short-term financial assistance and support services to move homeless families toward housing stability. The pilot's collaborative effort between the City of Seattle and King County also included partnerships with United Way of King County, Building Changes (a Seattle-based nonprofit organization), the Seattle Housing Authority, KCHA, and six local agencies spanning a wide range of client services.

King County Housing Authority Initiates the Student and Family Stability Initiative to Respond to Local Needs

SFSI traces its genesis to KCHA's partnership with the Puget Sound Educational Service District (Puget Sound ESD) to propose a rapid re-housing pilot as part of a 2012 Race to the Top[5] award. KCHA's longstanding commitment to developing housing programs around educational initiatives made collaboration with Puget Sound ESD an intuitive partnership. This innovative program partnership between the two entities was made possible through KCHA's designation as a high performance, Moving to Work (MTW) Housing Authority by HUD. This high performance designation allows KCHA to support local innovations and allows KCHA greater flexibility and discretion over how federal funds are allocated, including the use of federal funds to test the efficacy of rapid re-housing as an intervention for homeless and housing unstable families.[6] SFSI's development and implementation by KCHA is thus a direct result of the agency's ability to innovate through their MTW designation.

KCHA selected Highline Public Schools (HPS) as the educational partner for SFSI based on its successful partnership with HPS on previous programs in the school district and an identified need for additional services in the area. Through a competitive Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to implement the program, KCHA selected Neighborhood House (NH), a Seattle-based non-profit organization, as the sole administrator of the pilot. An external evaluator, Geo Education & Research (Geo), was selected prior to SFSI's implementation to facilitate evaluation throughout the pilot.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Defining "Homelessness"

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (MV) requires school districts to provide transportation to homeless students at no cost to the student. This Act, also known as "McKinney-Vento," is a federal law, among many other homeless assistance provisions, that provides federal guidelines for services that school districts are required to provide to homeless students (assuming the state in which the district is located accepts federal funds). The law dictates, among other guidelines, that school districts dedicate a "McKinney-Vento designee" to serve homeless students. The Act also requires districts to pay for taxi, bus, or other transit services so that students with McKinney-Vento

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[5] Race to the Top is a federal education reform initiative funded as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf for more information.

[6] KCHA has been consistently recognized by HUD as a high performing housing authority. With HUD's designation of KCHA as a "Moving to Work" (MTW) agency in 2003, KCHA was afforded a high level of flexibility to redesign its federally-funded programs to respond to local circumstances. The MTW designation also allows KCHA to pilot innovative housing programs and test ways to increase the cost effectiveness of federal housing programs, increase housing choices for low-income families, and encourage greater economic self-sufficiency of assisted housing residents.

status can continue going to their same school if they move outside the district. These costs are not reimbursed and can be quite substantial.

The collaboration between KCHA and HPS presents the partnership with two definitions of what it means to be homeless. These two definitions result from KCHA's use of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition for "homeless" and Highline Public School's definition of "homeless" being based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education.[7] HUD's definition of homeless is organized around four categories: literally homeless; at imminent risk of homelessness (within 14 days); youth or families with youth who meet the definition of homelessness under another federal statute; and individuals fleeing domestic violence. The Department of Education's definition of homeless captures these categories plus three additional categories: shared housing (often called "doubling-up") due to economic hardship; residing in a motel, campground, or other dwelling that is inherently transitory; and residing in substandard housing. For the purposes of program referral and enrollment, SFSI adopts the broader definition of homelessness from the Department of Education, meaning that participating families are defined as homeless under either definition.[8]

King County's Challenging Rental Market

In 2013 rental prices in Seattle, the seat of King County, were ranked in the top ten highest rents nationwide. Between 2010 and 2013, the gross median rent[9] for Seattle increased 11% to reach $1,172. This 11% increase was steeper than any other city in the United States.[10] These dramatic increases in rental prices, driven in part by Seattle's thriving technology-based economy and a corresponding influx of new residents, have significant repercussions throughout King County as individuals leave Seattle in search of more affordable housing. The movement of families from Seattle to surrounding areas, such as the communities in HPS, has driven up the demand for rental property. Increased demand, in turn, has decreased the supply of units and has driven up rental prices.

The decreasing supply of rental units and increasing rental prices has presented major barriers for low-income families in search of safe, stable housing. The case management approach, with dedicated housing support for each family enrolled in SFSI, was designed to help families navigate the area's

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[7] The way these agencies define "homeless" is based on federal statute: The Department of Education's definition of homeless is established by Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, while HUD's definition is based on the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 (National Center for Homeless Education. *Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families.* 2013. http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/hud.pdf)

[8] KCHA had the flexibility to design and implement SFSI with a broad definition of homeless because of the agency's designation as a Move to Work (MTW) housing authority.

[9] Rent plus utilities calculated across all size units.

[10] Gene Balk, "Census: Seattle saw steeper rent hike among major U.S. cities," *Seattle Times*, Sept. 18, 2014; http://blogs.seattletimes.com/fyi-guy/2014/09/18/census-seattle-saw-steepest-rent-hike-among-major-u-s-cities/

challenging rental market. As discussed later in the report, these rental market barriers have affected the timeline by which families enrolled in SFSI have been able to find suitable housing.

Highline Public Schools has a Growing Homeless Population

Over the past five years, from the 2009 school year to the 2014 school year, the number of homeless students in the district increased on average nearly 13% each year (see Figure 1). Following nationwide homelessness trends, HPS has experienced an increase in enrollment of homeless children in recent years.

FIGURE 1: HOMELESS STUDENTS IN HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
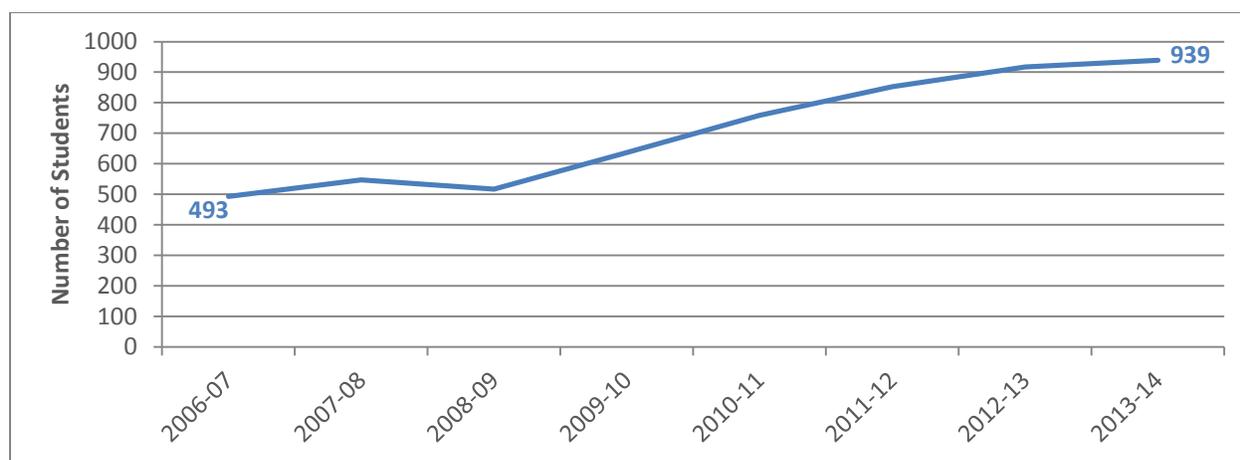
HPS serves nearly 19,000 students in Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Sea Tac, Boulevard Park, and White Center. The school district has 18 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 12 high schools[11]. In the 2013-2014 academic year, 69.3% of students in HPS qualified for free or reduced-price meals.[12] The increase in the number of homeless students has led to an increase in HPS' expenditures on transportation for homeless families (mostly in the form of taxi fees).

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[11] HPS also has 2 schools for students in grades 7-12.
[12] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2014). Washington State Report Card. Highline School District. http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/.

DESCRIPTION OF SFSI

Primary Partners

The program was developed in an active partnership under KCHA[13] leadership with HPS, NH, and Geo all engaged in early discussions about the program to help shape its character and processes. During the early stages of development and throughout the first year of SFSI, KCHA also worked with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national organization dedicated to innovative housing strategy. KCHA facilitated frequent partner meetings (at least monthly) that allowed free-flowing discussions of ideas and ongoing review of processes and results. Two HPS staff were engaged regularly in these meetings, and school-based counselors also attended meetings to give first-hand perspectives on client needs and on how SFSI addressed them. Parents in SFSI have also attended a few meetings and presentations. NH staff who managed SFSI and who worked directly with clients attended all meetings and reported on implementation successes and challenges so that the group could provide input and collectively find solutions. Geo attended most meetings to gather insights for its process evaluation and to ensure that SFSI processes and data collection efforts were aligned with SFSI goals and outcomes. The partners met and discussed issues as needed outside of the monthly meetings. Geo's discussions with HPS and NH data managers helped ensure the availability of data needed to evaluate the program.

SFSI's Objectives

SFSI's objectives are twofold:

1. Provide rapid re-housing support for families who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness[14] safe and stable rental housing and

2. Work with adults in each family to help them gain employment so that they can sustain housing at the conclusion of funding provided by SFSI.

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[13] King County Housing Authority's mission is to provide quality affordable housing opportunities and build community through partnerships. KCHA's service area includes 1.2 million King County's residents and spans more than 2,000 square miles. The agency provides a range of rental housing and rental assistance to more than 18,000 households throughout 33 cities (not including Seattle and Renton) in the county. Through partnerships with communities and nonprofits, KCHA's reach extends to more than 48,000 people who earn less than the county median income.

[14] This objective was initially designed to provide rapid re-housing support within a student's school catchment area; midway during Year One the program guidelines were modified to provide rapid re-housing support for MV students to live anywhere within the HPS district boundaries.

SFSI has four goals:

1. Provide short-term rent subsidies and services to assist homeless families find and maintain affordable and decent housing within the catchment areas of their children's current school assignments;

2. Keep the children in SFSI-assisted families at their school of origin, thus supporting student stability, reducing classroom turnover, and providing consistency in student education;

3. Provide employment services to assist participating families in securing employment income to maintain stable housing on their own after the rental subsidies end; and

4. Reduce McKinney-Vento transportation costs incurred by HPS, allowing the District to return these funds to the classroom through the general education fund.

Eligibility for SFSI from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014 (Year One) was based on the following family characteristics:

- At least one child enrolled at a targeted elementary school (later expanded to all elementary schools in the district); and

- Elementary school child's enrollment in McKinney-Vento Homeless services; and

- At least one parent's ability to work and earn a wage that covers rental payments once SFSI subsidies end; and

- Legal documentation status of at least one adult in the household to be eligible for federally-funded short-term rental assistance.

Neighborhood House Provides Direct Support to Participants

Neighborhood House (NH) is a well-established human services organization providing services throughout King County related to housing, employment, and children and youth development. NH's mission is to help diverse communities of people with limited resources attain their goals of self-sufficiency, financial independence, health, and community building.

Prior to implementation of SFSI, NH had existing partnerships with both HPS and KCHA. Additionally, the organization was an administrator of the HPRP funded through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which provided them with experience and expertise in the provision of rapid re-housing programming in contexts that preceded SFSI.

SFSI Enrollment Process Identifies Families In Need Who are Likely to Succeed

Designated McKinney-Vento staff at each HPS elementary school are pro-active in encouraging eligible families to apply to SFSI and are primary sources of information for SFSI in their schools. In most cases, these staff are already familiar with potentially-eligible families, which supports faster and smoother initiation of SFSI enrollment.

The multiple phases of screening administered by HPS, KCHA, and NH that precede SFSI enrollment maximize the prospect that enrolled families will achieve self-sustained housing. The screening process for SFSI is designed to simultaneously determine eligibility and to enroll eligible families as quickly as possible. Intake and screening is made up of multiple steps including being:

1. Referred by a school-based counselor to HPS McKinney-Vento liaison;

2. Screened and referred by HPS McKinney-Vento Designee to KCHA for baseline federal Section 8 eligibility; and

3. Screened first by phone and second in-person by NH staff.

Sequencing the enrollment process so that screening by NH staff follows screening by HPS staff eliminates the need for HPS staff to repeat the collection of private and/or confidential information from families. For example, adult family members must report any past criminal convictions that may prevent a successful housing or employment placement; this type of sensitive information is collected once and does not need to be collected again so HPS can focus on the educational circumstances of students.

SFSI Helped Families with Housing and Employment Needs Simultaneously

Through housing assistance and employment navigation services, SFSI provides homeless families with safe, stable housing *and* the means to earn an income to sustain such housing. KCHA's Initiative presents an innovation in the rapid re-housing model with the provision of employment navigation services as a central program component. These services are funded and supported by Building Changes, an intermediary funding organization for homelessness initiatives throughout Washington State, as part of a larger Systems Innovation Grant designed to provide employment services funding in support of both King County and KCHA's rapid re-housing pilots. Providing practical, goal-oriented employment navigation services for families experiencing homelessness, coupled with the short-term rental assistant that is central to the SFSI rapid re-housing model, maximizes a family's opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency at the conclusion of program participation.

Upon enrollment in SFSI, families are eligible for housing-related assistance which includes:

- Move in assistance covering housing search assistance, landlord negotiations, financial assistance with application fees, security deposits, and moving expenses.

- Support to address issues with past rental/credit history that present current barriers to housing (e.g., past due rent, evictions, overdue utility bills).

- Rental assistance and utility payment assistance for three months (with potential extensions of assistance up to six months).

During the screening and enrollment process adult family members complete an employability assessment form which allows NH case managers to assess the extent to which at least one adult in the household is willing and able to find employment. The employability assessment includes questions related to education level, past employment, and access to reliable transportation and childcare. Using these questions as diagnostic tools to identify barriers to employment, NH case managers create step-by-step action plans to help clients overcome barriers and move toward achieving steady employment.

Employment navigation services are also offered to all enrolled families. A wide range of employment navigation services are provided to adults in SFSI, including:

- Helping clients use workforce systems (WorkFirst, WorkSource, and local community/technical colleges) to obtain job placement services and employment;

- Providing flexible funds for job training and employment-focused support services; and

- Supporting clients throughout each stage of the employment search process (help creating a resume, searching job postings, interview coaching, etc.).

An Individual Employment Plan is a key component to the employment navigation services provided to adults in families in SFSI. The plan helps adults enrolled in SFSI to gauge the extent to which their attainment of short-term employment goals, such as following up on job postings and checking voicemails daily, can lead to achieving long-terms goals such as securing employment resulting in financial self-sufficiency. NH case managers also work with families to decide whether the family would like to prioritize housing, employment, or both. This individually-tailored approach affords adults enrolled in SFSI the flexibility to determine how best to achieve sustainable housing based upon their individual circumstances.

> "[Prior to enrollment in SFSI], I just felt this overwhelming judgment being passed on me . . . a judgment that would not help me succeed; pushing me down."
>
> --SFSI client

EVALUATION APPROACH

Geo partnered with KCHA, NH, and HPS throughout Year One to provide ongoing feedback about SFSI's evaluation and its outcomes. Geo's continuous involvement throughout Year One provided valuable access to program information about processes and outcomes. Including an evaluation team throughout the program's first year also allowed Geo to be an active partner in suggesting alternative ways to measure outcomes and access data as SFSI was developed and implemented.

During Year One, Geo focused on evaluating three categories of outcomes. The outcome categories correspond to SFSI's goals related to:

1. Housing outcomes;

2. Academic stability; and

3. Transportation costs for McKinney-Vento students.

The evaluation of these outcomes thus served two purposes:

1. To assess SFSI's outcomes in Year One, and

2. To provide perspective on how processes and services may be improved in future years.

The outcomes examined in this report are for SFSI's Year One. An implication of the Year One analysis means that in some circumstances families referred and enrolled in SFSI during the summer of 2014 were not counted as having attained stable housing in Year One even though these families were housed in the early months (e.g., September and October) of Year Two (from September 1, 2014, to August 31, 2015).

Evaluation Questions

The analysis in this report was conducted around five central evaluation questions:

1. *During Year One, how closely did SFSI's implementation align with the rapid re-housing component and other services initially proposed by KCHA?*

2. *To what extent did SFSI achieve its objective to provide homeless families with safe, stable housing, and how "rapidly" was this housing situation achieved?*

3. *What impact did SFSI have on improving the academic success of participating elementary students, as measured by school attendance and tardiness?*

4. *To what magnitude did SFSI decrease HPS' transportation costs for students housed through SFSI, and how did this decrease in transportation costs compare to SFSI costs for housing homeless families?*

5. *What recommendations emerge from Year One that can inform and improve processes and outcomes in SFSI's second year?*

Questions one and five provided valuable insight related to the nature of SFSI in Year One and how SFSI may need to be scaled or revised in subsequent years. Questions two, three, and four were based on SFSI's stated objectives in addition to other outcomes of interest to various stakeholders (e.g. KCHA's reporting to HUD's MTW program and reducing some of the costs to HPS of transporting homeless children).

The outcomes for the program along with other key elements are outlined in SFSI's Logic Model (see Figure 3). The outputs were targets based on a complete year. Since the implementation did not start as early as planned, the program did not meet these output estimates.

The SFSI Outcome Map illustrates this program's process and the roles of the various partners (see Figure 2).

Student and Family Stability Initiative (SFSI) Outcome Map

Partners

King County Housing Authority (KCHA)

Neighborhood House (NH)

Co-Funders
Building Changes   United Way

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Geo Education & Research (Geo)

Highline School District (HSD)

McKinney-Vento staff

School social workers

Transportation

Assessment

King County Housing Authority
- Provide program oversight
- Find funding and collaborators to expand program to serve more families with more services
- Provide management and technical support
- Establish and maintain collaboration among key program partners
- Share implementation data with partners

Reach out to parents and organizations about Program services (especially to more vulnerable groups)

Rapidly clarify eligibility and refer ineligible clients to alternative programs

Assign caseworker to guide and support family throughout its transition back to self-sufficiency

Develop tailored Family Plan for each family served to clarify needs for housing, employment, education, training, child care and other supportive services

Rapidly identify unhoused families or families at imminent risk of homelessness

Assist families in finding and securing appropriate housing with goal to be close to their students' current schools

Identify and work with families to remove barriers to permanent housing (e.g., improve credit, learn to manage finances, find child care and transportation, improve employment skills and job readiness)

Connect families to NH services and other organizations providing assistance

Assist parents in finding immediate employment, living wage jobs & other support

Collect and share data on student transportation costs, attendance and performance

Collect data and monitor families with 3, 6, 9, 12 month follow-up contacts to see if they are able to maintain housing

Outcomes

Student Outcomes
1. Decreased student commute times improve transportation modes
2. Increased attendance and decreased tardiness
3. Students are more engaged in extra-curricular activities

Parent & Family Outcomes
4. Most families find housing close to school of choice
5. Most divided families are re-united
6. Parents are more engaged in their children's schools and education
7. Parents are able to work find employment or better jobs
8. Employed parents have high job retention rates
9. Families have Improved financial stability
10. Families can afford rent when subsidy ends
11. Families remain housed
12. Parents are better able to navigate future financial and housing needs
13. Families have expanded and more resilient support systems
14. Parents feel better prepared to face similar crises in the future

Partner & Process Outcomes
15. Rapid service to homeless families
16. Most families are re-housed within first month of Program participation
17. Program management is effective and integrated
18. Decreased transportation costs for HSD

Geo Education & Research
- Design appropriate outcome measures and data collection tools
- Collaborate with KCHA, HSD and NH to collect and integrate data on families and students
- Analyze data to determine program outcomes and impacts and to suggest program improvements

Goals
- Families without housing are re-housed quickly and provided the support they need to remain housed
- Students in families with housing crises remain in their schools of choice and continue to learn and thrive with less disruption to their lives
- Community residents & leaders are aware of local housing needs & their impacts on student learning

SFSI Outcome Map 5.9.2014
Geo Education & Research

FIGURE 3: SFSI LOGIC MODEL

RESOURCES ➝	ACTIVITIES ➝	OUTPUTS ➝	OUTCOMES ➝	GOALS
♦ King County Housing Authority (KCHA) staff with management experience ♦ Highline Public Schools (HPS) McKinney-Vento designees, school counselors, data & transportation managers ♦ Neighborhood House (NH) staff, processes and experience with rapid re-housing programs and with serving diverse clientele ♦ Funding from KCHA, Building Changes, United Way	♦ Establish and maintain collaboration among key program partners ♦ Develop agreements on roles, responsibilities, eligibility requirements, needs, data sharing and reporting tasks HPS Activities ♦ Reach out to parents and organizations about program services (especially to more vulnerable groups) ♦ Rapidly identify unhoused families or families at imminent risk of homelessness ♦ Connect families to HPS, NH services and other organizations ♦ Collect and share data on student attendance and performance Neighborhood House Activities	Anticipated Year 1 ♦ 100 families with 300 students screened for program eligibility by HPS ♦ 40 families accepted for services ♦ Parent – caseworker contacts once per week prior to re-housing ♦ HPS – NH staff meet at least monthly ♦ 40 families re-housed ♦ 30-35 parents trained in job search or employment skills ♦ 35-40 parents are re-employed or obtain higher paying jobs	Student Outcomes 1. Decreased student commute times and improve transportation modes 2. Increased attendance and decreased tardiness 3. Students are more engaged in after school activities Parent & Family Outcomes 4. Most families find housing close to school of choice 5. Most divided families are re-united 6. Parents are more engaged in their children's schools and education 7. Parents are able to work find employment or better jobs 8. Employed parents have high job retention rates 9. Families have Improved financial stability	♦ Families without housing are re-housed quickly and provided the support to remain housed ♦ Students in families with housing crises remain in their schools of choice and continue to learn and thrive with less disruption ♦ Community residents & leaders are aware of local housing needs & their impacts on students

RESOURCES →	ACTIVITIES →	OUTPUTS →	OUTCOMES →	GOALS
◆ Technical assistance from Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) ◆ Other re-housing programs (King County RRH, 211 Helpline)	◆ Rapidly clarify eligibility and refer ineligible clients to alternative programs ◆ Assign caseworkers to guide and support families throughout its transition ◆ Provide interpreters as needed ◆ Develop tailored Family Plan for each family to clarify needs and track services		10. Families can afford rent when subsidy ends 11. Families remain housed 12. Parents have more knowledge and skills to navigate future financial and housing needs 13. Families have expanded and more resilient support systems 14. Parents feel better prepared to face similar crises in the future	
◆ Network of other NGO's to provide additional services to clients ◆ Networks of landlords and employers ◆ program evaluation services from Geo Education & Research	◆ Identify and work with families to remove barriers to permanent housing (e.g., improve credit, learn to manage finances) ◆ Assist families in finding and securing appropriate housing with goal to be close to their students' current schools ◆ Interact with landlords to resolve past and present barriers to housing ◆ Inspect housing (with KCHA assistance) to ensure adequacy of accommodations	◆ $4,000 - $5,000 provided per household for family housing and related needs ◆ Average of $500 provided per worker for retraining and support needs (e.g., short-term training, work clothes, transportation)	Partner & Process Outcomes 15. Rapid service to homeless families (e.g., identification of families in need by HPS; eligibility decision by NH; referral of ineligible families to other services) 16. Most families are re-housed within first month of program participation 17. program management is effective and integrated (clarity on partner roles and responsibilities and program	

RESOURCES ⟶	ACTIVITIES ⟶	OUTPUTS ⟶	OUTCOMES ⟶	GOALS
	♦ Provide direct financial assistance to clients for housing, deposits, utilities, and other needs ♦ Identify and help families resolve employment barriers (e.g., transportation, child care) ♦ Assist parents in improving employment skills and job readiness ♦ Assist parents in finding immediate employment, living wage jobs & other support KCHA Activities ♦ Provide program oversight ♦ Find funding and collaborators to expand program to serve more families with more services ♦ Provide management and technical support as needed		protocols; data sharing agreements are in place and followed); increased data sharing to speed and improve service delivery with appropriate safeguards; increased collaboration among system partners; strategy to continue program) 18. Decreased transportation costs for HPS	

PROCESS EVALUATION SHOWED IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOWED MODEL

Geo collected qualitative data from SFSI partners and analyzed SFSI documents over the course of the first year to explore the extent to which SFSI's implementation aligned with the rapid re-housing component and other services proposed by KCHA. The goals of this process evaluation were to:

1. Provide a summary of how the program unfolded to contextualize the outcomes achieved in SFSI's Years One and Two, and

2. Identify any program processes and practices during Year One which likely contributed to SFSI's positive outcomes.

Year One Activities Met Anticipated Timeline and Adjustments were Made

Planning for SFSI began in August, 2013. Stakeholders were assembled beginning in September with ongoing meetings in October. The first meeting, facilitated by Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)[15], helped clarify many of the elements, processes, and intended outcomes illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. During these early months KCHA, NH, and HPS developed screening protocols and tools along with a range of program policies and procedures. The culmination of these programmatic developments took place on October 23, 2013, when Highline school-based counselors and NH staff participated in SFSI's preliminary implementation training. Referrals to SFSI began in late October, with enrollments beginning in November, 2013. Families began to secure housing through SFSI in January, 2014. Twenty-three families had been housed through SFSI by the end of the pilot year (August 31, 2014). Year one SFSI milestones are explored in greater depth in the next section of this report.

Program partners from Highline Public Schools, KCHA, NH, and Geo met monthly during the pilot year. These meetings served two purposes. First, they provided an opportunity for "case reviews" where elementary school counselors, KCHA staff, and NH case managers discussed particular families and how SFSI could best serve families with special or particularly challenging circumstances. The second purpose of these meetings was to evaluate program processes and determine if SFSI policies and procedures could be adjusted to better serve Highline families experiencing homelessness. Examples of such adjustments during Year One included:

- Pausing program referrals and enrollments temporarily so NH case managers could focus on serving families already enrolled in SFSI;

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[15] CSH is a technical assistance organization dedicated to expanding supportive housing programs.

- Allowing Section 8 voucher holders to be screened into the program;

- Expanding the geographic area (within the boundaries of HSD) in which homeless families could obtain housing through SFSI;[16]

- Expanding SFSI from an initially-targeted eight elementary schools to all elementary schools in the district; and

- Prioritizing the referral and enrollment of homeless families whose children used taxi cabs for travel to and from school in order to decrease MV transportation expenses.

The monthly meetings ultimately provided SFSI with a high degree of flexibility in effectively delivering services and with a shared sense of decision-making across program partners.

Collaboration and Flexibility Led to High Implementation Fidelity

Implementation fidelity is an aspect of program evaluation that seeks to explore the extent to which a program is implemented as proposed. A high level of fidelity means the program and its elements are implemented as proposed; a low level of fidelity means that over the course of its implementation, the program develops in a manner inconsistent with how it is proposed.

Geo found clear evidence that SFSI was implemented with a very high level of fidelity. Evidence of the high level of fidelity was based on documents obtained prior to SFSI's implementation (e.g., requests for proposals, grant applications), meeting minutes and notes from throughout Year One, and an analysis of programmatic outcomes (presented in the following sections of this report). This high level of fidelity was attributed to the three following factors:

- The model around which SFSI was designed;

- The degree of collaboration among SFSI partners; and

- The flexibility that allowed partners to make programmatic adjustments throughout Year One in an effort to more effectively achieve SFSI goals (e.g., expanding to more schools and expanding housing search areas).

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[16] This adjustment was implemented because of the scarcity of rental units in some elementary school catchment areas; by expanding the geographic area in which families could reside, families remained in HPS but also had more options for housing.

SFSI's design met and exceeded the three elements of a rapid re-housing program which the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of HUD, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have collaboratively identified as "core elements"[17]. These elements are:

1. Housing Identification;

2. Financial Assistance with Rent and Move-In Costs; and

3. Housing Case Management and Services.

Employment navigation services, added a fourth element to these three core elements, ultimately increasing the odds that a family is able to afford their housing costs once SFSI subsidies end. Employment navigation services therefore leveraged the three evidence-based core elements by adding another set of services that maximized families' potential for successfully attaining stable, safe housing.

Two additional drivers behind SFSI's high implementation fidelity surfaced from qualitative data collected from NH case managers. Geo conducted semi-structured interviews with each of three NH case managers[18] toward the end (in July and August 2014) of Year One to explore, firsthand from the case managers' vantage point, what characteristics made SFSI a success.

Flexibility

NH case managers identified flexibility and collaboration as the key to the fidelity of SFSI. NH case managers gave multiple examples SFSI's flexibility.

> *"The program's design really guarantees that we can do everything we can to help clients succeed," explained one NH case manager, "but at the same time the program's design is flexible so that we can usually change something if we need to do something differently to get a family into housing."*

Examples of SFSI's flexibility included both financial and nonfinancial aspects of the program. For example, financial flexibility included the ability of NH case managers to use program funds to overcome a range of barriers which may keep families from obtaining housing (e.g. past-due utility bills, no cash on hand to pay a rental deposit).

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[17] National Alliance to End Homelessness. Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing. 2014. Accessed: http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/RRH.pdf.
[18] During the pilot year the NH team had two case managers and one employment navigator; we refer to all three as "case managers" in this section to keep confidential each individual's remarks and identity.

In describing nonfinancial flexibility, NH case managers praised a programmatic decision midway through the pilot to expand the area in which families could find housing (from the McKinney-Vento student's elementary school attendance area to a larger geographic area within the school district).

> *"When everyone agreed to this change [to expand the boundaries of where families could find housing] that was so huge for a few families that were having a hard time finding an apartment in their child's elementary school area," explained one case manager, "and the fact that we could change our policy was proof to me that we really cared about getting these families housed and doing what was best for them."*

Collaboration

Collaboration across partners was the second theme to emerge as being critical to SFSI's high level of fidelity. Collaboration across partners was crucial to effective implementation because the nature of SFSI's design depended on a coordinated delivery of services among HPS, NH, and KCHA.

> *"It's so important to have everyone [program partners] at the table," said a NH case manager, "because we are all working on the same goals. Everyone being on the same page, talking about the challenges these families face, and figuring out how best to serve these families means we all move forward together."*

Monthly stakeholder meetings were an important element to effective collaboration across partners and, subsequently, the successful implementation of SFSI.

> *"Meeting each month is a huge help to us because we get so much information and we're also able to provide so much information to other [SFSI] people who need it," remarked a NH case manager. Said another case manager, "The amount of communication we have in this program is really impressive, and that's something that I think makes SFSI unique. Getting together every month to talk things through and problem solve has really made navigating this first year of the program much, much smoother."*

With an aggressive and productive timeline over the course of its first year, coupled with intentional efforts across all partners to roll out SFSI as it was proposed, Geo found strong evidence that SFSI was implemented through effective and efficient processes. These processes produced a high level of implementation fidelity in SFSI's first year, and left the program well positioned for continued and expanded success in the second year.

HOUSING OUTCOMES

A summary of housing outcomes in Year One shows that **23 out of the 86 families referred to SFSI by HPS secured housing**[19] (see Table 1). Placing 23 families in safe housing in SFSI's first year represented a significant achievement for SFSI's partners when one considers SFSI was implemented simultaneously with service delivery to clients. The rigorous referral and screening process, plus the wraparound housing search and employment navigation services, represented a significant amount of programmatic effort invested not only in the 23 housed families but in all families that came into contact with SFSI during its first year.

Table 1 captures a summary of SFSI's milestones achieved for Year One which are reviewed in greater detail throughout this section. Of 86 families screened by NH, 52 families were ultimately enrolled in SFSI. At the cut-off date for this report (8/31/2014), 23 of these families had found housing and seven families had already successfully completed SFSI. Others families were still in the search process.

TABLE 1: SFSI PRIMARY OUTCOMES OF INTEREST IN YEAR ONE

Outcome	#
Families referred to NH after preliminary screen by MV Designee	86
Families screened out after NH screening	34
Families ultimately enrolled in SFSI	52
Families that began a housing search	42
Families housed during Year One	23
Families successfully completing SFSI during Year One	7

Eligible families may have been screened out of the enrollment process at two junctures. At the first juncture, a Highline McKinney-Vento Liaison determined preliminary eligibility of homeless families referred by school counselors. Thirteen families referred by school counselors during the Year One were not referred forward in the enrollment process. The reasons why these families did not move forward included: they were already participating in a transitional housing program (61.5%); they did not want to enroll in SFSI upon learning about SFSI requirements (15.4%); they were unwilling to live within HPS district (15.4%); or they had other reasons not captured in SFSI records (7.7%).

The second juncture where families may be screened out of the enrollment process is during phone and in-person eligibility assessments carried out by NH case managers. Thirty-four families screened out during this process in Year One for reasons including: lack of contact with NH staff for more than 30

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[19] There were 13 other families referred by HPS school counselors who did not meet the criteria for referral to NH.

days[20] (26.5%); they were not eligible for SFSI based on requirements (24.5%); they were not employable or not willing to find employment (17.6%); they had a general disinterest in pursuing SFSI (17.6%); or they had another reason not captured in SFSI records (17.6%).

Table 2 presents program referrals, screening, and enrollment milestones by month during SFSI's first year.

TABLE 2: MONTHLY REFERRAL, SCREENING, AND ENROLLMENT (OCTOBER 2013 TO AUGUST 2014)

Action	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Referrals to NH	1	24	12	18	3	0	4	12	4	0	8	86
By Phone		12	12	9	16	2	6	11	3	2	4	77
In-person		7	10	6	17	3	2	8	7	4	3	67
Enrolled		6	8	7	11	3	1	5	6	2	3	52

The trends in Table 2 reflect the "pause" that SFSI stakeholders put on referrals and enrollments in the spring of 2014 to allow NH case managers an opportunity to work with those families already referred and enrolled in prior months. This pause was lifted in May, leading to an increase in referrals and enrollments from that month on for the remainder of Year One. Cumulative totals for referrals, screening, and program enrollments (see Figure 4) illustrate month-to-month growth in these milestones.

> "I found I could have the support of a team to give me a hand up. Not a hand out, but a hand up."
>
> --SFSI client

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[20] A lack of contact between a family and NH case managers for 30 or more days meant a family was given an inactive status in SFSI records; "inactive" families were always welcome to re-engage with NH case managers and resume their housing and/or employment searches.

**FIGURE 4: CUMULATIVE REFERRALS, SCREENING, AND ENROLLMENT IN YEAR ONE**
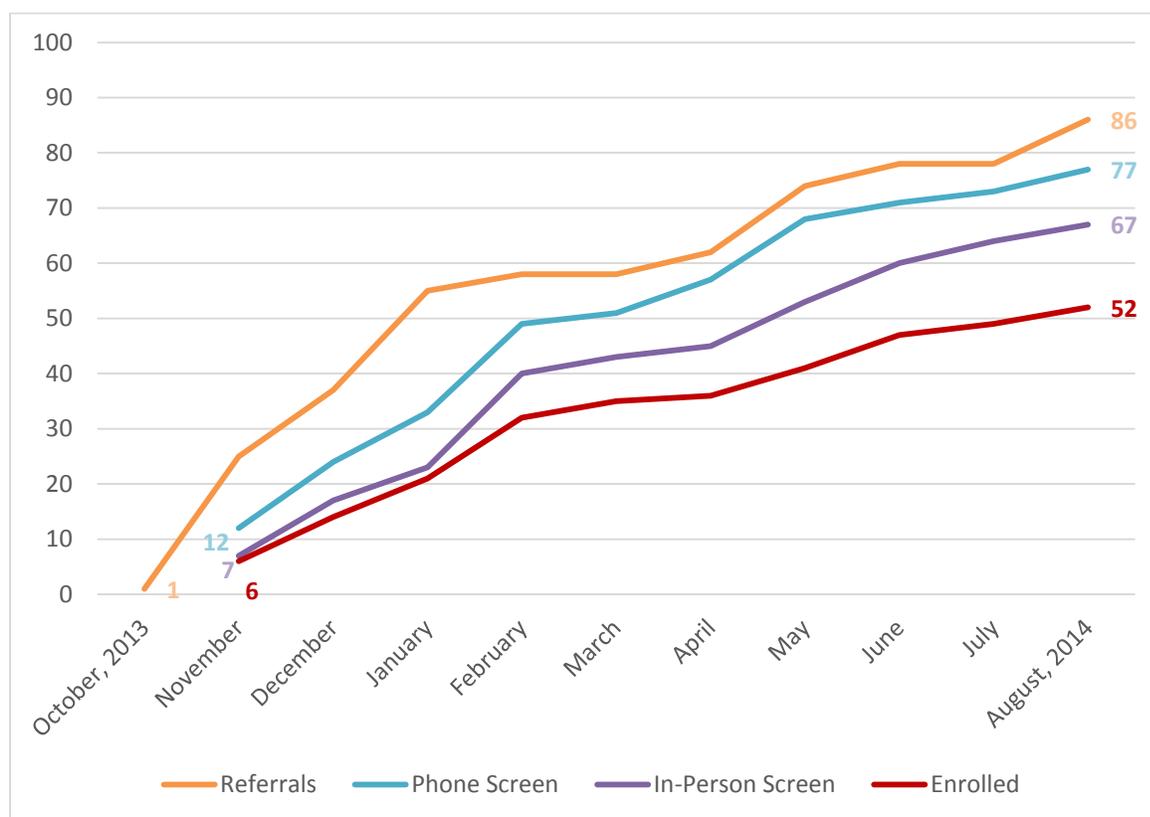
Table 3 contains the month-to-month counts of housing milestones reached by the 52 families that enrolled in SFSI during Year One. It is worthwhile to note here the singular lease signings occurring in April, May, and June were largely a lagged response to the pause in referrals and enrollments during March and April. The upward trend in the enrollment, search, and lease signing milestones in June, July, and August (see Figure 4) are likely to continue into the first months of SFSI's second year.[21]

TABLE 3: HOUSING SEARCH MILESTONES BY MONTH (NOVEMBER 2013 TO AUGUST 2014)

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Enrolled	6	8	7	11	3	1	5	6	2	3	52
Began Search	1	11	4	5	3	3	5	5	2	3	42
Lease Signing			3	1	6	1	1	1	4	6	23
Successful Completion						3		4			7

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[21] Due to the sporadic nature of program participants' successful completion of SFSI (that is, three in April and four in June) we do not include this outcome as a trend line in Figure 4.

There were two processes through which homeless families were served through SFSI: 1) referrals, screening, enrollments (see Figure 4), and 2) housing searches and leases (see Figure 5). A consistent trend in Year One shows more families were served as the program was implemented and increased its capacity. All evidence suggests this trend will increase in Year Two.

FIGURE 5: Cumulative Housing Search Milestones in Year One
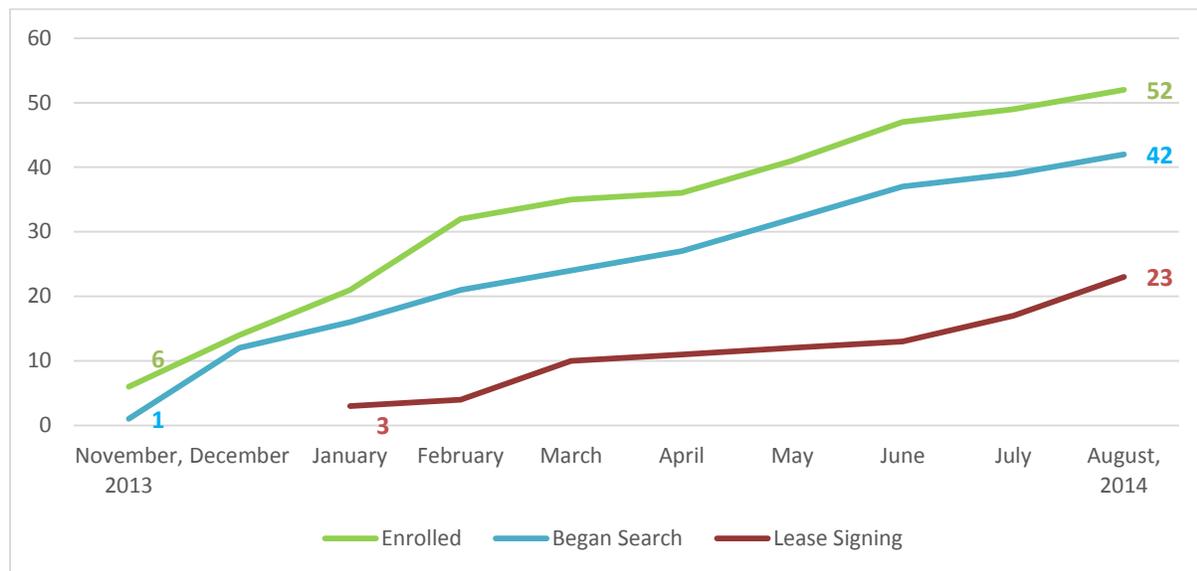
Seven families successfully completed SFSI by attaining self-sustained housing during Year One (see Table 3). Although follow-up data on housing stability was limited to seven families at this early juncture, NH case managers will follow-up with all clients who have completed SFSI's program at three, six, nine and twelve-month intervals to collect data on post-program housing stability. Significant, however, was that of the three families that successfully completed SFSI in April, all three families were still housed at the time of the three-month follow-up.[22] At three months after program completion, two of the three families were still housed in the same unit into which they initially moved while the other family had moved to a different unit.

Rapidity of SFSI Milestones is Consistent with Model Programs

Although rapid re-housing programs are a relatively new approach to serving homeless families, a general consensus is that stable housing is achieved "ideally within 30 days of a client becoming

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[22] The families completing the program in June, 2014 would have had their three-month follow up in September, 2014; since for reporting and evaluation purposes the Year One data collection period ended August 31, the three-month follow-up data for June completions will be reported in the Year Two Evaluation report.

homeless and entering a program." [23] Two timeframes were analyzed to explore the rate at which SFSI participants moved through the program on their way to stable housing. The first time frame, **from when a family was referred to when the family enrolled, had a median of 26 days**; the second time frame, **from when the family enrolled to when the family signed a lease and moved into a unit, had a median of 64 days**[24] (see Table 4). **The overall median time frame during Year One from referral to housing was 105 days.** The longer times needed by some families made the means for these time periods longer.

TABLE 4: RAPIDITY OF PROGRAM MILESTONES DURING YEAR ONE

Milestone	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Number of days from referral to enrollment (n=52)	26	28	15
Number of days from enrollment to housing (n=23)	64	99[25]	69
Number of days from referral to housing (n=23)	105	131	73

Two characteristics of the figures reported in Table 4 deserve context: the spread (i.e., the standard deviation) of the data and the housing market in which SFSI housing searches took place. The standard deviations for the number of days from enrollment to housing and the number of days from referral to housing are large and thus reflect a wide range of values for this measure of rapidity. The first quartile (which cuts the data at the bottom 25% when the data are sorted in ascending order) for the number of days from enrollment to housing has a value of 45 days while the top quartile (a cut of the data at the top 25%) has a value of 139 days. This wide spread is likely a result of many factors such as the local housing market, the size of unit for which a family was searching, the area in Highline Public Schools where the family hoped to live, or time of the year.

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[23] National Alliance to End Homelessness. Rapid Re-Housing: A History and Core Components. 2014. Accessed: http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing2
[24] This compares favorably to the average of 65-70 days it takes KCHA families with Section 8 vouchers to find and secure housing after they receive a voucher.
[25] For context, consider that 88.3 days is the five-year average number of days from enrollment to lease signing for KCHA's Section 8 recipients.

The second contextual factor is the nature of the rental market in the communities comprising Highline Public Schools. As noted earlier in this report, market trends and an improving economy in recent years have driven up rental prices and driven down the supply of available units, two factors which put pressure on a SFSI family's housing search. These challenges with the housing market conditions are often confounded by the fact that housing families requires units with two or more bedrooms, further reducing the potential rental inventory from which SFSI families could choose. SFSI's objective to provide housing to families thus differentiates the program from other rapid re-housing models that assist single adults with housing assistance.

Housing Retention Milestones in Year Two

The seven families that exited the program in Year 1 demonstrated that SFSI successfully moved homeless families through the referral and enrollment process into the housing search process, which in turn led to families completing the program and successfully exiting SFSI. In Year Two, evaluation efforts will increasingly focus on housing stability with an eye toward families' post-program experiences. Specifically, NH case managers will conduct follow-up phone surveys with clients at regular intervals (3, 6, 9, and 12 months after exit). The survey will allow program partners to answer such questions as:

- Do families continue to receive services from NH after short-term housing assistance ends (and if so, what kind)?

- Do families stay in their new rental units or move to other units?

Family Profile

Mary is a single mother of four children, including a baby. Before enrolling in SFSI and finding an apartment with the support of her Neighborhood House case manager, Mary and her children had been homeless for seven months. She had no family in the area so they often relied upon help from friends. During that seven-month period, Mary worked almost full-time at a minimum-wage job but spent about 80% of her income on fuel for her vehicle. The family's often-changing living locations ranged from as far north as Mukilteo to as far south as Puyallup, while her job and the children's schools remained in Burien. She worked hard to ensure that her children stayed in the same school, in an effort to provide them with some continuity while they were without stable housing.

Mary and her children moved into an apartment in Burien in July 2014. Since moving in, she and her children have been able to do more activities together, including the children's favorite activity of swimming. They also live closer to her work and the children's school. Three days after moving into the apartment, Mary started working at a more highly-paid job in a warehouse. With her new position, she can afford to stay in the apartment and is also contributing monthly to a savings account.

- If families move, where do they go; what types of housing do they find; do they move closer to or farther from their children's schools; why do they move?

- Do their children change schools (and if so to which schools)?

- What are families' current rents, incomes, income sources and rent burdens?

- Are families receiving other types of housing assistance?

- Have families experienced certain problems paying rent or utilities?

- Have families experienced other changes in their housing situations (e.g., household members moving in or out)?

Housing Circumstances of SFSI Participants

Families enrolled in SFSI during Year One experienced a range of housing circumstances prior to their referral to SFSI. Even though McKinney-Vento and SFSI enrollment require that families are homeless, the term "homeless" can represent a variety of meanings (see Table 5).

TABLE 5: POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILIES PRIOR TO OBTAINING HOUSING

Circumstance	Description
Literally Homeless*	The family has no shelter of any kind
Shelter, Time-Limited*	The family is temporarily located in a homeless shelter
Motel[†]	The family is living in a motel
Doubled-Up, Overcrowded[†]	The family is living with other family or friends but the living situation is overcrowded
Doubled-Up, Unstable*	The family is living with other family or friends but the living situation is unstable
Doubled-Up, Stable[†]	The family is living with other family or friends and the situation is stable but the family still lacks housing of their own
Already Receiving Subsidy[†]	The family is homeless and currently receives Section 8 subsidy but has not been able to secure housing
Transitional Housing*	The family is currently involved with a transitional housing program but does not have stable housing

* Denotes HUD homeless criteria † Denotes U.S. Department of Education homeless criteria

These circumstances were captured at the time of referral, which affords an opportunity to evaluate families' progression through SFSI milestones based on their circumstances (see Table 6 and Figure 6).

TABLE 6: CIRCUMSTANCES AT TIME OF REFERRAL OF FAMILIES REFERRED, ENROLLED, AND HOUSED DURING YEAR ONE

	No. of Referred Families	Percent of Referred Families	No. of Enrolled Families	Percent of Enrolled Families	No. of Housed Families	Percent of Housed Families
Doubled-Up, Overcrowded†	25	28.7%	16	30.8%	10	43.5%
Doubled-Up, Unstable*	17	19.5%	12	23.1%	6	26.1%
Motel†	12	13.9%	8	15.4%	4	17.4%
Doubled-Up, Stable†	10	11.5%	6	11.5%	1	4.3%
Literally Homeless*	8	9.2%	3	5.8%	0	0%
Shelter, Time-Limited*	8	9.2%	5	9.6%	1	4.3%
Already Receiving Subsidy†	3	3.4%	5	9.6%	1	4.3%
Field Blank	2	2.3%	0	0%	0	0%
Transitional Housing*	1	1.1%	1	1.9%	0	0%
Total	**86**	**100.0%**	**52**	**100.0%**	**23**	**100%**

* Denotes HUD homeless criteria † Denotes U.S. Department of Education homeless criteria

FIGURE 6: PROGRAM MILESTONES IN THE CONTEXT OF FAMILIES HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCES
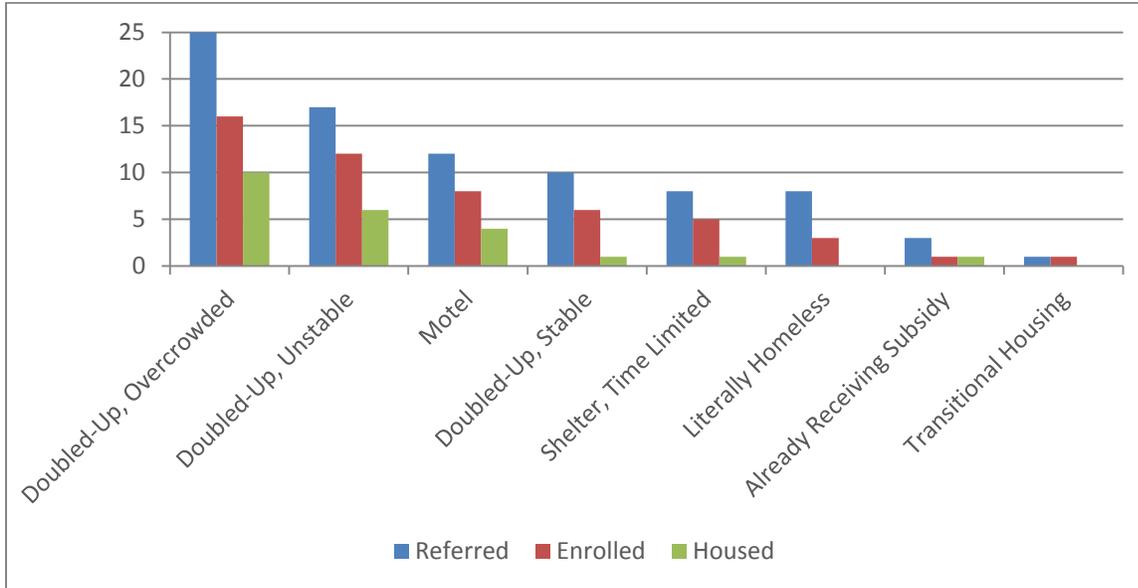
Circumstances related to "doubled-up" (see Table 5 for descriptions) situations (crowded, stable, and unstable) represent a significant proportion of the families that reached each SFSI milestone. In addition to "doubled-up" situations, families in motels also represent a meaningful proportion of the families that progress through SFSI milestones (see Table 7).

TABLE 7: PERCENT OF THOSE FAMILIES ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM DURING THE PILOT WHO WERE HOUSED

Housing Circumstance	Enrolled	Housed	Percent Housed
Already receiving subsidy	1	1	100.0%
Doubled-Up Overcrowded	16	10	62.5%
Doubled-Up Unstable	12	6	50.0%
Motel	8	4	50.0%
Shelter-Time Limited	5	1	20.0%
Doubled Up Stable	6	1	16.7%
Literally Homeless	3	0	0.0%
Transitional Housing	1	0	0.0%

The "doubled-up" categories and families living in motels comprise a significant portion of families housed through SFSI. This suggests that homeless families that are doubled-up or in motels face circumstances that are undoubtedly challenging but at the same time responsive to SFSI's design that seeks to provide short-term support so families can attain long-term housing and academic stability.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Employment navigation services are a critical element to SFSI's goal of helping families achieve housing stability. During Year One, a total of 59 adults (in 38 families) enrolled in SFSI and used the employment navigation services provided by NH case managers. Of those 59 adults, 16 individuals (in 15 families) obtained employment during the first year.[26] A total of ten families obtained *both* employment and housing in the first year.

Adults who obtained employment (n=16) through SFSI employment navigation services typically found opportunities in food service or entry-level service positions in healthcare. Most adults secured full-time jobs (working an average of 35 hours/week) at an average hourly wage of $11.25, although one adult was hired into a 40-hour week position earning $18.50/hour. The average hourly wage of $11.25 is nearly two dollars above the state's minimum wage ($9.32/hour in 2015).

SFSI's employment navigators took a broad approach to supporting families to find employment that would enable the family to sustain stable housing. To this end employment navigators also encouraged families to pursue education and training that could expand employment opportunities. In Year One, three adults took advantage of career education and training. The training programs included a three-week certified nurse assistant (CNA) training program, an eight-week bank teller training program, and a twelve-week pre-apprenticeship training that helped women enter non-traditional careers in construction trades and manufacturing.

> "[My case manager] came up beside me, and helped me to stay strong. It was vital. Absolutely vital"
>
> --SFSI client

Evaluation efforts will continue to focus on SFSI participants' employment outcomes in SFSI's second year with an added focus on the continuity of employment. Follow-up phone surveys conducted with SFSI participants that successfully completed the program will gauge the extent to which adults remain employed and able to cover housing expenses. Survey data will also contain wage information to identify growth in families' income post-SFSI participation.

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[26] Worthwhile to note in the context of this number of families obtaining employment is that 22 families reported at least once source of employment income at the time of SFSI enrollment. In other words, 22 families enrolled fit one of the program's definitions of homeless *and* also had at least one adult employed when the family enrolled in SFSI.

Family Profile

Andrea and her 4 children were living doubled-up with her brother and his family. Andrea faced two challenges in finding stable housing; in addition to the size of her family requiring a multi-room rental unit, she had an erroneous eviction on her rental history. Her Neighborhood House case manager was in the process of helping Andrea correct this erroneous eviction but the process was stalling. Thinking creatively, the Neighborhood House case manager advocated for the client through the past property manager (that had erroneously reported the eviction) to facilitate a discussion between the past property manager and the potential landlord to explain the mistake that was made. This collaborative effort between landlords and the Neighborhood House case manager ultimately empowered Andrea to find a three bedroom apartment for her family, which she moved into in March, 2014. With additional financial assistance, Andrea was able to go to a local nonprofit organization, Sharehouse, which provides furniture to recently-homeless families to obtain beds and other essential items.

Prior to enrolling in SFSI, Andrea was in the process of finishing the pre-apprenticeship construction training at the South Seattle Community College Georgetown Campus. She was also participating in WorkFirst. To meet SFSI's job search expectations, Andrea went to the union hall from 6 AM until 9 AM every day for a month hoping to be called for an assignment. At the beginning of her third month of rental assistance, Neighborhood House amended her employment plan because her rental subsidy was almost up. She expanded her job search to include more local jobs. The next day, she was placed in a laborer position through the union, working full-time for $19/hour on a project that would last six months. Although the position is a very labor-intensive and demanding job, Andrea is very happy with her job and very thankful for the opportunity to work.

SFSI paid the family's rent for 4.5 months (into July 2014). By August, Andrea was paying her own rent.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

While rapid re-housing programs are emerging around the United States as an innovative way to serve homeless populations, SFSI represents a further innovation by leveraging schools as the gateway through which homeless families are identified and referred into SFSI. The central role of schools in SFSI's design, and the intentional targeting of homeless families with elementary school children, means that SFSI has the potential to positively transform homeless students' educational experiences by providing stable housing.

Eight elementary schools were initially selected as target schools at SFSI's inception (see Table 8). The preliminary focus on eight schools was intended to provide a manageable number of families for SFSI in Year One. By spring of 2014, however, SFSI partners authorized and prioritized the enrollment of MV families using taxi cab transportation from any HPS elementary school. By the end of Year One, at least one MV family from 15 of HPS's 18 elementary schools was enrolled in SFSI.

TABLE 8: School Characteristics, 2013 - 2014 Academic Year

School	Total Enrollment	Number of MV Students	MV Percentage
Midway*	638	51	7.99%
Hazel Valley*	621	62	9.98%
Seahurst*	578	47	8.13%
McMicken Heights*	534	57	10.67%
Shorewood*	466	30	6.44%
Beverly Park*	496	37	7.46%
Parkside	567	43	7.58%
White Center Heights*	580	22	3.79%
Bow Lake*	661	30	4.54%
Des Moines	415	20	4.82%
Madrona	636	42	6.60%
Cedarhurst	708	30	4.24%
Gregory Heights	637	16	2.51%
Hilltop	621	27	4.35%
North Hill	572	12	2.10%
Total	**10,316**	**572**	**5.54%**

* Denotes school was in original cohort of schools targeted by SFSI

Since schools represent a centerpiece of SFSI's service delivery model, SFSI milestones (referrals, enrollments, and housing) are delineated by Highline elementary schools (see Table 9).

TABLE 9: PROGRAM MILESTONES BY SCHOOL

School	Number of Families Referred	Number of Families Enrolled	Percent Enrolled of those Referred	Number of Families Housed	Percent Housed of those Enrolled
Midway*	21	15	71.4%	8	53.3%
Hazel Valley*	18	11	61.1%	5	45.5%
Seahurst*	11	6	54.5%	2	33.3%
McMicken Heights*	7	3	42.9%	1	33.3%
Shorewood*	6	5	83.3%	1	20.0%
Beverly Park*	4	1	25.0%	1	100.0%
Parkside	4	2	50.0%	0	0.0%
White Center Heights*	4	3	75.0%	0	0.0%
Bow Lake*	3	3	100.0%	3	100.0%
Des Moines	2	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
Madrona	2	0	0.0%	0	N/A
Cedarhurst	1	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Gregory Heights	1	0	0.0%	0	N/A
Hilltop	1	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
North Hill	1	0	0.0%	0	N/A
Total	**86**	**52**	**60%**	**23**	**44%**

* Denotes school was in original cohort of schools targeted by SFSI

A number of characteristics observed in Table 9 are noteworthy. For example, **15 of Highline's 18 elementary schools referred at least one McKinney-Vento family to SFSI**, a figure which suggests a broad programmatic reach that could be capitalized upon in SFSI's second year. Further, **75% of the schools that had at least one family enrolled in SFSI had a family who obtained housing through SFSI during the first year**. Given this large proportion of engaged Highline elementary schools, SFSI appears well poised to leverage these existing connections and continue to expand its reach in the second year.

Demographics of Students

Table 10 contains the demographic characteristics of the 30 students whose families were housed through SFSI during Year One (For comparison purposes the demographic characteristics HPS's McKinney-Vento population are also included.) The demographic factors of SFSI's student population are important to consider as evaluations of SFSI's impact on academic achievement are carried out in subsequent years; if a large proportion of students served by SFSI are from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, plus a third of SFSI students are English Language Learners, housing will be one critical element - but not necessarily a stand-alone solution - in efforts to boost these students' academic achievement.[27]

TABLE 10: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN HOMELESS FAMILIES OBTAINING HOUSING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN SFSI (N=30)

Characteristic	SFSI	All MV students in HPS
Average age of student (years)	7.3	
Average age of primary adult (years)	34	
Single parent families	42.9%	
English Language Learners	30.6%	11.8%
With a special education designation	13.3%	16.3%
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	73.3%	28.2%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	16.6%	13.4%
African American/Black	3.3%	20.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3.3%	7.3%
Two or more races/Other	3.3%	5.7%
Caucasian/White	0%	25.1%

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[27] The relationships between academic achievement and a student's race, as well as a student's designation as an English Language Learner (ELL), are pervasive and extensively documented in American elementary and secondary education. The U.S. Department of Education finds that African American and Hispanic 4th grade students in Washington State consistently perform at academic levels in reading and mathematics that are lower than their White peers; English Language Learners (ELL) in Washington State similarly perform at academic levels lower than their White counterparts. For more context see *Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2009)* and *Achievement Gaps: How Hispanic and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2009)*, both publications of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics.

Student Transportation

A homeless student's enrollment in the McKinney-Vento program requires that a school district provide transportation for that student to and from her school regardless of where she may temporarily reside. Table 11 shows that students referred to, enrolled in, and housed through SFSI used a range of transportation options to travel to and from school.

TABLE 11: TRANSPORTATION TYPE BY REFERRALS, ENROLLMENTS, AND HOUSED FAMILIES AT TIME OF REFERRAL[28]

Transport Type	Referred	Enrolled	Housed	Percent Housed
School Bus	35	24	12	50.0%
Taxi	24	15	5	33.3%
Parent	15	10	5	50.0%
Unknown	7	0	0	N/A
Walk	3	2	1	50.0%
Metro Bus	2	1	0	0.0%
Total	**86**	**52**	**23**	**44.2%**

Although students who travel by taxi cabs are a primary focus of SFSI as a target for potential cost savings, the monetary and nonmonetary costs associated with other types of transportation are important to consider when evaluating how stable, safe housing benefits homeless families. For example, consider a McKinney-Vento student who may travel the length of the district to attend school each day (e.g., a student may have temporary access to shelter in White Center but need daily transportation to Midway Elementary, a distance of more than 12 miles, which in traffic can take upwards of 30 minutes one-way to travel). This student and her family incur high daily costs getting to school, either in time the student spends on a school bus or in time and fuel costs the parent must incur driving the student to and from school. This report attempts to monetize the savings to Highline Public Schools in decreased taxi cab costs generated by SFSI, but that figure understates the monetary and nonmonetary benefit many families likely experience upon securing stable housing near their student's school. In Year Two of the evaluation an effort will be made to evaluate transportation costs and cost savings in more detail.

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[28] These data were collected by NH case managers when the families were preliminarily screened into SFSI.

Attendance and Tardiness

Education outcomes are a key aspect of evaluating SFSI's effectiveness since the program draws a direct link between stable housing and improvements in students' educational experiences. Conventional measures of academic achievement however, such as reading comprehension assessments and statewide tests, are typically collected on an annual basis and are therefore not well suited to capture the immediate changes in a student's academic experience that occur pre- and post-housing during SFSI's first year.

As an alternative to conventional measures of academic achievement, Geo analyzed attendance and tardy data for students at the eight program schools where SFSI was provided to McKinney-Vento students during the pilot year (2013-2014 academic year). Highline Public Schools provided to Geo student-level data for all students at SFSI's eight program schools along with a percent of days absent and a percent of days tardy for each student[29]. For SFSI participants, Highline Public Schools also provided a percent of days absent and a percent of days tardy for the period before the student received stable housing and for the period after the student received stable housing. These percentages were assumed to provide a means to evaluate differences in absences and tardiness related to stable housing.

Before examining the relationships between days absent, days tardy, and SFSI participation, homeless students' attendance and tardiness were compared to non-homeless students. Since there were only 30 students in the program cohort, it limits how meaningful the analysis can be. Nevertheless, we offer some observations from Geo's analysis here and some tables on the details in the appendix.

Homeless students were absent more often and tardy more often compared to non-homeless students at the eight program schools selected SFSI's first year.

Grouping together all SFSI students who were housed during the pilot year and examining attendance and tardy data based on pre-housing and post-housing showed that rates of absences and tardiness increased in the post-housing period but at levels which were not statistically significant.

Comparing absences and tardiness for housed students pre-housing compared to all other homeless students at the program schools revealed non-significant differences. Before SFSI students received housing their rates of absences and tardiness were no different from those of other homeless students.

Absences and tardiness for housed students post-housing were compared to homeless students at the program schools. Comparing post-housing attendance and tardiness rates for SFSI students yielded a

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[29] HSP redacted all student names and other identifiers.

non-significant difference for absences but a significant difference in tardiness. In other words, SFSI program students had a significantly higher rate of tardiness after being housed compared to other homeless students at the program schools[30]. This increase in tardiness for housed students was not necessarily problematic and could be, in fact, a result of new housing for a student requiring new habits of getting ready for school in the morning plus new methods and routes for transportation to school from the student's new home.

Overall, this analysis showed no meaningful impact, either negative or positive, on rates of attendance and tardiness for students housed through SFSI's first year. Geo believes that in SFSI's second year a number of factors will increase the likelihood of successfully identifying gains in academic-related outcomes based on participation.

- Highline Public Schools will provide academic achievement data to facilitate the analysis of SFSI students and appropriate comparison groups of other Highline students.

- As SFSI grows and more students' families' obtain housing through the program, the sample size of students housed (the "n") will increase and become more sensitive to analyses attempting to identify statistically-significant differences between program students and students in comparison groups.

- Geo will collaborate with evaluators working on other KCHA housing/education initiatives to explore how SFSI's academic outcomes can align with and inform findings from KCHA's programs throughout King County.

> "I think that [my children] could probably conquer anything now [that they have seen me conquer this hurdle]."
>
> --SFSI client

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[30] Actual figures appear in the Appendix.

TRANSPORTATION AND PROGRAM COST OUTCOMES

Comparing two cost categories – estimated transportation cost savings per family and program costs per family – allowed for a high-level approximation of the extent to which program benefits potentially exceed costs. The goal of this analysis was illustrative of future potential. The analysis of SFSI's net benefits generated in its first year provides insight into the value of scaling the program in Year 2 and beyond.

Five families with eleven students using taxi cabs as their primary mode of transportation to and from school were housed through SFSI during Year One. The cost of taxi cab transportation for these eleven students was $2,250 a week. The cost to HPS for each family's taxi cab transportation averaged $450 a week although one family with children transported to a Highline elementary school from Puyallup (30 miles away) had a weekly taxi cab cost of $950. The weekly cost for taxi cab transportation per-student was $204 but since siblings often take taxi cab rides together, considering these costs on a per-family basis is more appropriate than a per-student basis.[31]

Assuming an average taxi cab cost of $450/week for each McKinney-Vento family needing this type of transportation assistance means **HPS spent approximately $16,200 per McKinney-Vento family over the course of a school year. Housing just five homeless families with children who used taxi cab transportation for an entire year would allow the district to avoid $81,000 in potential annual costs**[32]. SFSI was able to help these five (and many other) families find housing during Year One. Since the costs avoided were only for part of the year, the actual savings were lower. However, **if these families retain their housing (and this will be tracked for 12 months) the longer-term costs avoided could be much greater than $16,200 per family.**

This $81,000 estimate assumed average taxi cab costs of $450/week. Yet for families incurring higher-than-average transportation costs, such as the family with children transported from Puyallup to a HPS elementary school, potential cost savings were significantly greater. Housing the family with children being transported by taxi cab from Puyallup, for example, saved the Highline Public Schools an estimated $32,400 over the course of a school year.

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[31] We express our thanks to the Highline Public Schools Transportation Office for providing the taxi cab cost data that made possible these estimates of transportation cost savings attributed to SFSI. To calculate the average weekly taxi cab costs for each family housed through SFSI, we worked with the HPS Transportation Office to collect the taxi cab receipts for SFSI students for a randomly-chosen 2-4 week period during the academic year; we then used the average weekly taxi cab cost over that 2-4 week period to estimate an average weekly taxi cab cost per family. This provides a coarse estimate but we believe this estimate is the best approximation of weekly costs given the limited taxi cab cost data maintained by HPS.

[32] Assuming the five families needed taxi rides for an entire school year—an estimate of the maximum cost to the district.

Highline Public Schools dedicates a significant amount of resources to transporting McKinney-Vento students; the district spent $846,157 in 2013-2014 and $787,600 in 2012-13 on McKinney-Vento transportation (of which $560,693 and $520,000 was spent on taxi cabs, respectively). Additionally, some neighboring school districts share the cost with Highline of transporting McKinney-Vento students from neighboring districts to and from Highline Public Schools. In these circumstances the transportation costs savings generated by SFSI have the potential to impact neighboring districts, too. **In its pilot year SFSI has clearly demonstrated significant cost savings. With a continued focus on enrolling homeless families who depend on taxi cab transportation, SFSI has the potential in Year Two of the program to save Highline Public Schools hundreds of thousands of dollars in McKinney-Vento transportation costs.**

Comparing Program Costs to Avoided Transportation Costs

The five families that were housed who relied on taxi cabs for transportation provide an opportunity to compare program costs to the taxi cab transportation costs that HPS avoided. Distributing Year One fixed program costs across all enrolled families that began a housing search in Year 1 (n=42) yielded per family costs of $1,131 for employment navigation services and $2,619 for housing search and related administrative services. The unique per family housing expenses (security deposits, monthly rental assistance, etc.) tracked by KCHA and NH for the five housed taxi cab families equaled $24,868; added to this amount was $3,363 in support provided by Building Changes (SFSI funding partner) to the five families for various types of assistance that fell outside the scope of housing assistance (e.g. help with costs related to car repair, personal hygiene items, bus passes). Thus $24,868 in housing assistance costs, $3,363 in other support costs, and $18,750 for the five families' share of distributed program costs (i.e., $3,750 per family multiplied across five families) yielded an estimate of $46,981 in total costs to house the five families using taxi cabs as their mode of transportation to and from school. **The $46,981 annual cost to house the five families compared to the annual $81,000 in taxi costs potentially avoided by HPS demonstrated a potential annual cost savings of more than $30,000 for these five families.[33]**

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[33] SFSI's net benefits projected here should be viewed as a relatively conservative estimate considering other program benefits, both monetary (such as wages from employment gained by adult family members) and non-monetary (including potential increases in a family's safety and stability) are unaccounted for in this analysis. Other transportation costs for the use of special buses that transport students are also avoided but data are not available to estimate these costs.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis in this report answered five evaluation questions central to SFSI in Year One.

1. *During Year One, how closely did SFSI's implementation align with the rapid re-housing component and other services initially proposed by KCHA?*

   Geo found strong evidence that SFSI was implemented with a very high level of fidelity to its proposed model in Year One. In particular, KCHA successfully engaged many partners and stakeholders in SFSI to identify all facets of needs and provided the expertise and assets required to address them. KCHA staff kept all partners informed, engaged and working collaboratively. When challenges arose, the partners were able to address them quickly and effectively in order to keep the process working smoothly and to deal with unforeseen events. The monthly meetings, frequent other communications, and online tracking of progress kept all participants informed of the process and results. The attendance of building level staff and parents at some of the meetings provided important grassroots insights that helped all partners understand the nuances they needed to address.

2. *To what extent did SFSI achieve its objective to provide homeless families with safe, stable housing, and how "rapidly" was this housing situation achieved?*

   SFSI housed 23 families during its first year; the median number of days from referral to enrollment was 26 days; from enrollment to housing it was 64 days. Average numbers of days were higher. For this sample size, the medians were more indicative of the trends. SFSI housed a significant number of families despite normal program initiation efforts and the need to educate many people about SFSI during implementation. NH worked through many staffing and startup challenges and worked with diligence to address the individual needs of applicants as fast as possible. All partners recognized the urgent needs facing families in crisis and worked to serve families as fast as possible while meeting the participation requirements established to encourage long-term success for families.

3. *What impact did SFSI have on elementary students, as measured by school attendance and tardiness, whose families were housed through SFSI?*

   Based on the number of students housed (n=30) and in the absence of district-wide student achievement tests administered to student pre- and post-housing, **no school-related impacts for SFSI were identified in Year One**. In the future we hope to review more (and more detailed) data from the district and to have more students in the cohort so that we can at least see impacts on attendance.

4. *To what magnitude did SFSI decrease HPS' transportation costs for students housed through SFSI? How did this decrease in transportation costs compare to SFSI costs for housing homeless families?*

    The program allowed HPS to avoid MV-related taxi cab transportation costs to the magnitude of up to $81,000 for the five families housed who used taxi cabs. These avoided transportation costs, compared to program costs[34], translated to nearly $30,000 in net savings for the five families housed (due to reduced taxi costs by housing students closer to school and eliminating the need to travel to and from school using District funds for taxi service). If SFSI can be scaled up to serve even more of the families using taxi service, HPS could save even more money in future years.

5. **What recommendations emerge from Year One that can inform and improve processes and outcomes in SFSI's second year?**

    SFSI's expanded definition of homelessness – incorporating both HUD's and the Department of Education's definitions – **allowed the program to demonstrate its broad reach by serving vulnerable families living in doubled-up situations**. These families were identified and referred to SFSI because of the strong partnership between SFSI and school-based counselors throughout HPS. Even closer coordination between NH case managers and school counselors could potentially connect harder-to-reach populations (e.g., families that are literally homeless or fleeing domestic violence situations) with SFSI resources.

    If SFSI is scaled up (increasing the number of schools and families served), the client load for NH case managers may limit the number who can be served or the time it will take to serve them unless more staff are hired. Scaling up without more case managers or without staggering the work of case managers (e.g., focusing on assessment during one time period and on leasing during another) might impact the rapidity with which case managers are able to serve clients and interact with school counselors, which is a key element of the program. The program needs a strategic plan for scaling up.

    Monthly stakeholder meetings were critical to SFSI's success throughout Year One. Continuing meetings in Year Two is important. They allow partners to hear from each other about typical and challenging client situations and solutions, to review trends in the data being collected and analyzed (KCHA also provides up-to-date trends on a website that partners can view and interact with), and to discuss ways to improve the program.

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[34] These include direct assistance to clients for housing, utilities, and associated move-in costs plus staffing costs for Neighborhood House. More details on costs are provided in the appendix.

NH case managers mentioned the following areas to be further explored in Year Two:

Make available hotel vouchers for homeless families so that NH case managers can provide temporary stability to families who are at imminent risk of homelessness or already in motels. The temporary stability provided by the hotel vouchers would allow NH case managers to work closely with families and expedite their progress through house search milestones (e.g. apartment searches, submitting applications, lease signing, moving into a unit).

Conduct a focus group with McKinney-Vento parents in HPS to understand what they need and want from a program like SFSI. There may also be value in having a focus group with SFSI parents to explore what they liked and did not like about their experience using SFSI.

> "No matter what is going on, no matter how much you think you are going to fail and you don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, you can conquer it. You can be triumphant. You just have to always get up after you fall. Just keep on rising up."
>
> --SFSI client

GEO EDUCATION AND RESEARCH'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to strengthen evaluation methods, Geo provides the following recommendations in Year Two:

- **Continue working with HPS to measure SFSI's impact on student outcomes.** Both student achievement data and micro-level attendance and tardiness data have the potential to reveal meaningful program impacts over time.

- **Encourage HPS to develop a system for collecting and analyzing taxi cab cost data** so these data can be leveraged for evaluation purposes and as a diagnostic tool to identify families with high transportation costs for potential SFSI enrollment. A clear channel of communication between the HPS Transportation Office, the McKinney-Vento Designees, and the NH case managers would also allow for better identification of MV students being transported by taxi cabs and how MV students' transportation circumstances change over time.

- **Partner with HPS to develop a strategy and system to estimate bus-related transportation costs as another potential cost avoidance tactic.** At this time HPS does not have the means to measure student's cost in time spent on a bus or the monetary cost of routing buses throughout the district to transport McKinney-Vento students.

APPENDIX

Attendance and Tardiness Data Analysis

These figures, discussed in the Student Outcomes section of the report, illustrate the differences between SFSI students and comparable (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (MV) students and Non-MV students) for the Highline Public School (HPS) populations. As noted, this analysis shows no meaningful impact, either negative or positive, on rates of attendance and tardiness for students housed through SFSI during Year One.

TABLE 12: COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS OF MV STUDENTS (N=371) TO NON-MV STUDENTS (N=4,219)

	Average Percent of Days	
	Absent	Tardy
Non-MV students	5.3 %	4.4 %
MV students	8.8 %	6.7 %
Statistically significant difference?	Yes	Yes

TABLE 13: ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS OF SFSI STUDENTS HOUSED DURING YEAR ONE (N=30)

	Average Percent of Days	
	Absent	Tardy
Pre-housing	8.2 %	8.8 %
Post-housing	9.3 %	10.3 %
Statistically significant difference?	No	No

TABLE 14: ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS OF HOUSED SFSI MV STUDENTS (N=30) COMPARED TO OTHER MV STUDENTS (N=371), PRE-HOUSING

	Average Percent of Days	
	Absent	Tardy
SFSI MV students	8.2 %	8.8 %
Other MV students	8.8 %	6.7 %
Statistically significant difference?	No	No

TABLE 15: ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS OF HOUSED SFSI MV STUDENTS (N=30) COMPARED TO OTHER MV STUDENTS (N=371), POST-HOUSING

	Average Percent of Days	
	Absent	**Tardy**
SFSI MV students	9.3 %	10.3 %
Other MV students	8.8 %	6.7 %
Statistically significant difference?	No	**Yes**

Pilot Program Budget and Expenditures

Direct budgeted program expenses totaled $307,608 for Year One and 89% was expended. Of this, amounts budgeted for rent, move in expenses, and other expenses equaled $163,233. Budgeted housing case management and administration fees equaled $100,833. Budgeted employment navigator expenses equaled $43,542. (See Table 16.) The expended funding does not represent all rent assistance paid on behalf of families due to the timing of when their rent assistance started/ended. Geo will provide a more in-depth analysis of expenditures in its Year Two evaluation report.

TABLE 16: TOTAL PILOT PROGRAM BUDGET EXPENDITURES

	Pilot Budget Oct. 2013-Aug. 2014	Expenditures through August 2014	% Expended through August 2014
Housing Case Manager and Administration fees *	$100,833	$100,833	100%
Employment Navigator **	$43,542	$43,542	100%
Rent and Flexible Move In Assistance*	$128,233	$110,282	86%
Flexible Client Assistance**	$35,000	$21,281	62%
Totals	**$307,608**	**$275,000**	**89%**

*King County Housing Authority
** Leveraged funding through Building Changes System Innovation Grant