



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

College Housing Assistance Program: A Summary

Last Revised March 18, 2019

THA now budgets to house or pay to house nearly 300 homeless enrolled students at Tacoma Community College (TCC) and the University of Washington at Tacoma (UW Tacoma). This effort is called the THA College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP). It has four main elements:

1. Housing for Homeless or Near Homeless TCC or UW Tacoma Students

THA provides or finances housing in three ways:

- THA provides rental assistance to help pay rent on the private rental market;
- THA provides apartments it purchased near campus.
- THA signs long term contracts with private developments near the campuses to reserve apartments for homeless or near homeless college students. THA pays down the rents to levels affordable to the students.

Most of these homeless students are parents. A sub cohort of TCC CHAP students begin their college studies while in prison. After their release they come to campus and continue their studies.

The assistance lasts until graduation or a maximum of 3 years for TCC students and 4 years for UW Tacoma students. TCC CHAP students who get a 2 year degree can retain their housing assistance if they transfer to UW Tacoma for a 4 year degree.

TCC and UW Tacoma market CHAP on campus, manage the applications and the wait list, and refer students to THA or to the private housing. They also provide on-campus support.

2. Campus Support

TCC and UW Tacoma provide CHAP students with support and resources. TCC has a fund of \$30,000 a year to help CHAP students pay security deposits, utility deposits, and rent arrearages, purchase furniture and cover other housing expenses. UW Tacoma has an emergency aid program to help eligible students pay security deposits and rental related costs.

3. Academic Expectations

CHAP students receiving tenant-based assistance must make academic progress toward a degree: (i) remain enrolled in 12 or more credits; (2) maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average; (3) participate in support services. TCC provides them with “navigators” and “Completion Coaches”. CHAP is still designing the academic expectations of the property-based students.

4. Third-Party Evaluation

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University is the program’s third party evaluator. It will track metrics for assisted and unassisted homeless students. These metrics include grade point average, retention-graduation rates, and post-graduation earnings and use of public services. The Kresge Foundation funds the evaluation.

Harvard’s Kennedy School named CHAP among the nation’s top 25 most innovative governmental initiatives for 2018. ([Learn more at goo.gl/ZMFfTV](http://goo.gl/ZMFfTV))



BACKGROUND

CHAP began in 2014 as a pilot program at TCC. TCC has a student population of nearly 14,000 students. It is the largest college in the South Puget Sound Region. In comparison to students of other colleges, TCC students are older, lower income, more likely to be parents, more likely to be working, and more likely to be their family's first to attend college. TCC is justifiably proud of the warm welcome it gives them. A TCC degree can transform their lives.

Yet, a notable number of TCC students do not have stable housing. In 2016, the University of Wisconsin's HOPE LAB surveyed TCC students about basic needs. 69% of TCC students responding to the survey reported serious housing insecurity within the 12 month prior to the survey; 27% reported that within those 12 months they experienced homelessness. [Learn more about the University of Wisconsin HOPE Lab Report](#). It is hard to attend college without a stable place to live. The challenges are harder for homeless students who are also parents. Most homeless students drop out.

The pilot program housed 47 homeless TCC students and their children. The pilot's evaluation tracked their retention/graduation rates and grade point average, in comparison with 154 homeless TCC students who did not fit in the pilot. The results after two years were very encouraging:

	Homeless/Near Homeless TCC Students Receiving Housing Assistance (47)	Homeless/Near Homeless TCC Students Receiving No Housing Assistance (154)
Graduated or Remaining Enrolled	60%	16%
Grade Point Average	3.05	2.75

These pilot results and the HOPE LAB survey results impelled CHAP's expansion at TCC and, in 2018, to UW Tacoma.

EDUCATION PROJECT

CHAP is part of THA's Education Project. This project seeks to spend a housing dollar not only to house someone but also to (i) help them and their children succeed in school and (ii) help Tacoma public schools and colleges educate low-income students. When it works it is a very good use of a housing dollar. To learn more about THA and its Education Project visit www.tacomahousing.org.

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