



# TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

## THA's EDUCATION PROJECT: ELEMENTS

*Last revised January 23, 2019*

### PURPOSE OF THA's EDUCATION PROJECT

THA's Education Project seeks ways to spend a housing dollar, not only to house people, but also to promote two other outcomes:

- help the children and grown-ups it houses succeed in school;
- help Tacoma and Pierce County 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 go to [www.tacomahousing.org](http://www.tacomahousing.org)

### ELEMENTS OF THA's EDUCATION PROJECT

1. Early Childhood
2. P – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade
3. After High School Education and Training

#### 1. EARLY CHILDHOOD

<b>1.1</b>	Head Start/ ECEAP Classrooms at THA properties	THA hosts a Head Start classroom of the Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) at its Bay Terrace community building. It is in a classroom THA built for the purpose. It is the only TPS Head Start classroom outside a school building.
<b>1.2</b>	Children's Book Distribution Program	THA distributes about 10,000 children's book a year. It has bookcases at all of its properties and offices. THA stocks them with children's books. A sign encourages people to take and keep the books. THA staff encourage children and parents to take and keep books. Staff also offer them a soft word about the importance of reading. THA housing inspectors carry books with them to leave with families during inspection visits. Doing this also "softens" the effect of an inspection.

**1. EARLY CHILDHOOD ELEMENTS [continued]**

<b>1.3</b>	Early Child Development Center and Child Care Providers at Salishan <i>(planned)</i>	New Salishan is THA’s largest community. It is a 200 acre HOPE VI redevelopment of rental housing and home ownership. THA plans to turn its present community building into the region’s largest early childhood development center and child care provider.
<b>1.4</b>	Hillsdale Heights Intergeneration Campus <i>(planned)</i>	THA owns 7 acres in Tacoma’s Eastside called Hillsdale Heights. THA and its partners will develop the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● single family homes or townhomes to rent to low-income families fostering or adopting high needs children;</li><li>● apartments for low-income seniors who by living there agree to be respite caregivers, honorary grandparents and support to those children and families;</li><li>● facilities for the child welfare organizations that will manage the services for the campus.</li></ul>

2. P– 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
2.1	Tacoma Public School Housing Assistance Program	<p>THA houses or pays to house homeless families with children enrolled in Tacoma Public Schools.</p> <p>This program began in 2011 at McCarver Elementary School. McCarver Elementary School had yearly transient rates that ranged up to 179%, primarily because of family homelessness. On the strength of the third-party evaluation of outcomes since then, THA and TPS plan the program’s expansion to house more homeless TPS families in all schools and all grades. The expansion will begin September 2019. They are also redesigning the program to account for what they learned from the McCarver experience about what worked and what did not work.</p>
2.2	Children’s College Savings Account Program (CSA)	<p>Tuition is not the only barrier that keeps low-income students out of college. In addition, their parents make the misjudgment early on that college is not affordable or otherwise not for their children. As a result, their children make the same misjudgment. Even if tuition is covered by the College Bound Scholarship program (<i>see</i> section 2.5) families and students struggle with the non-tuition costs of attendance. The cost of housing is the primary challenge. For these reasons, these students do not expect to go. They do not prepare to go. If they seek to go, they do not have enough support to tell them how to go or how to pay for it. And if they go, they are not ready or do not feel like they belong. This can be especially true if they are low-income, students of color or the first in their family ever to go to college. Yet research reports that such low-income children with college savings accounts starting young, in comparison with low-income children without accounts, are much more likely to enroll in college, and to graduate. <i>See</i> <a href="http://www.prosperitynow.org">www.prosperitynow.org</a></p> <p>THA’s College Savings Account Program offers accounts to all children at THA’s community of New Salishan. It has 2 main parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>the Match:</b> starting in kindergarten through 5th grade the program will match a family’s deposits into the accounts up to \$400 per year;</li> <li>● <b>the Incentive:</b> from 6th through 12th grade, the program will make further deposits into the accounts up to \$700 per year as the student meets designated milestones, largely of an academic nature</li> </ul> <p>Students who participate fully from kindergarten will graduate from high school with at least \$9,700. These account balances become available to the student only for the cost of attendance at a qualified post-high school education or training program;</p>

**2. P – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade [continued]**

<p><b>2.3</b></p>	<p>Arlington Drive Campus for Homeless Youth and Young Adults</p>	<p>A significant number of youth and young adults are homeless in Pierce County. These young people face much higher risks of drug abuse, sex trafficking, violence, and greatly diminished prospects for a reasonable adolescence, an education, an occupation and a successful adulthood.</p> <p>THA owns 3.5 acres near its community of New Salishan. THA calls it Arlington Drive. With partners, THA will develop a campus on that property with the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>12 bed Crisis Residential Center/HOPE Facility (CRC) for homeless youth, ages 12 to 17 years.</b> Community Youth Services (CYS) will manage the CRC. CYC has been doing this work for 45 years in Thurston County. It is a national leader in its successful, evidenced-based practices. That service model has a 91% rate of successful discharge of these youth to a safe and stable housing after an average 12 day stay. At that rate, the Arlington CRC will serve and save nearly 400 youth a year;</li> <li>● <b>58 rental apartments for homeless young adults, age 18 to 24 years (30% will be parents);</b> The YMCA of Greater Seattle will provide supportive services to these young adults. The Y is also a national leader in this work, with an evidence based service model.</li> </ul> <p>This campus will be in walking distance of the following complementary facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First Creek Middle School;</li> <li>● Tanbara Regional Primary Health Care Clinic;</li> <li>● East Side Community Center</li> <li>● Salishan</li> </ul> <p>This campus will give these youth and young adults a second chance at a reasonable adolescence, an education, a livelihood and a second chance at a life without exploitation, abuse, impoverishment and fear.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b></p>	<p>Attendance Early Warning Program (planned)</p>	<p>Chronic absenteeism is an important predictor of a student’s school failure. PS and THA will devise a data exchange that will alert THA of any child in its housing programs missing too much school. THA caseworkers will then inquire and help redirect the student back to school.</p>

<p><b>2.5</b> College Bound Scholarship Enrollment Project</p>	<p>A post-high school certificate or degree is an important determinate of adult prosperity. Yet most low-income students, even if they graduate from high school, do not enroll in such programs after high school; even fewer graduate from them. The prohibitive cost of tuition is one reason. Yet that should not be a barrier in Washington State because of its College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program.</p> <p>The CBS is a promise that the state makes to every low-income student: if you graduate from high school, end with at least a 2.0 Grade Point Average, stay out of serious trouble and enroll in a qualified post-high school degree or certificate program, the state will pay for tuition up to the average cost of a state four year college. This is a life-transforming promise. However, there is a catch. The student and his or her parents must sign up for the program by the end of the student’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade. When THA began this enrollment initiative, over half of Tacoma’s students and THA’s students were missing out on this promise.</p> <p>THA began a very aggressive effort to enroll its 8<sup>th</sup> graders every year. It succeeded four years in a row to enroll nearly all of them. It did this by adding the CBS enrollment form to the normal paperwork that THA does with its families every year. This took advantage of a fact of nature: that someone who has just signed four pieces of paper is probably willing to sign a fifth. THA also participated in an aggressive citywide enrollment effort that takes place in the middle schools. That city-wide effort has been successful enough to allow THA to subordinate its own efforts. This project will now monitor that citywide enrollment to determine if THA ever needs to resume its own efforts.</p>
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### 3. AFTER HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OR TRAINING

**3.1** College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)

THA houses or pays to house 250 homeless students enrolled at Tacoma Community College (TCC) and the University of Washington Tacoma. The Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation named this program as one of the “[Top 25 Innovations in American Government for 2018](#).” This effort addresses the growing homelessness among Tacoma’s college population. A 2016 survey of TCC students reported that 69% experienced housing instability and 27% experienced homelessness. Housing makes a big difference in their outcomes. THA and TCC’s data from a pilot study show that after two years only 16% of homeless students remained enrolled; yet, 60% of the housed students graduated or remained enrolled.

	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 positive outcomes allowed THA to expand the program to serve 20 students. It does this in three ways:

*Rental Assistance*

**First**, THA provides rental assistance to 150 homeless or near homeless TCC students. About 70% are parents. Students must make adequate academic progress toward a degree. The assistance lasts until graduation or 3 years. The program includes 25 homeless TCC students who begin their studies while in prison; (Most are mothers reuniting with children; because of their criminal record, their housing problems are particularly challenging.)

*THA’s Housing*

**Second**, THA also rents its own housing to homeless or near homeless TCC students. As originally designed, the CHAP presumed that its rental assistance would allow students to find housing on the rental market reasonably close to the TCC campus. That worked until 2017 or so when the rental market around the campus, even with rental assistance, became unaffordable. In response, THA purchased apartments within walking distance of the campus. It now owns 120 apartments. THA also purchased a 7 acre mall across the street from the campus. Within the next 5 years or so, on this mall, THA and its partners will develop 300 to 500 apartments, with commercial and community space. A portion of these apartments will house TCC students.

*Contracts with Private Apartments*

**Third**, THA has long term contracts with owners and developers of market rate apartments. These contracts reserve apartments for homeless or near homeless TCC or University of Washington Tacoma students. THA pays a subsidy to the owner to buy down the rents to levels affordable to those students. To date, THA has 114 apartments under such contracts within an easy walk of either the TCC campus or the University of Washington Tacoma campus. THA seeks to expand this to still other privately owned apartment complexes.

<b>3. AFTER HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OR TRAINING [continued]</b>		
<b>3.2</b>	Rapid Rehousing Investment for Homeless Young Adults	THA invests \$1.288 million yearly into Pierce County’s rapid rehousing system for rental assistance for homeless families with children and homeless young adults (aged 18-24)(\$288,000 is for the young adults). Using these funds, Pierce County contracts with local housing providers to assist homeless young adults find housing. The providers help young adults to find educational and employment resources. The goals of the program are to stabilize the young adults so they do not return to homelessness and get another chance at a successful adulthood.
<b>3.3</b>	Rental Assistance for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care	THA has a HUD program (Family Unification Program) and its own local program to provide rental assistance to youth aging out of foster care. It is important that these vulnerable young adults have adequate housing as they begin their adult life. This program provides up to three years of rental assistance and, in partnership with a local non-profit, provides case management to help participants get education and job training and a job.

The initiatives showing in this chart supplement THA’s mainline housing programs that provide affordable housing to thousands of very low-income households with children. Those programs house or pay to house 1 of every 7 Tacoma public school student and 1 of every 4.5 low-income Tacoma public school student. That assistance by itself increases the educational prospects of these children and their parents.