



# TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: A SUMMARY

*[Last revised October 11, 2017]*

The Elementary School Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) is part of Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA) Education Project. This project seeks ways to spend a housing dollar, not only to house people, but also to help them and their children succeed in school and to promote the success of Tacoma schools and colleges serving low-income students. THA's Education Project is a robust partnership with Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) and other educational institutions. To learn more about THA's Education Project, please visit [www.tacomahousing.net](http://www.tacomahousing.net).

### BACKGROUND

The Elementary School Housing Assistance Program began in 2011 as a pilot at McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma, WA. Before that intervention, the annual transient rate of McCarver students ranged between 114% and 179%. This transience resulted from widespread family homelessness and deep family poverty. Research shows that such transient rates have a ruinous effect on school outcomes of the children who come and go and their classmates who must sit there and watch it happen. In response, THA and TPS devised the ESHAP.



### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

As originally designed, ESHAP has five elements:

- **Housing**  
THA provides rental assistance for up to 50 homeless or near homeless families whose 85 children at McCarver constituted about 20% of the school's student population. The rental assistance lasts for up to 5 years.
- **Parental Commitments**  
The Project asks cohort parents to make the three commitments: keep their children enrolled at McCarver; engage in their child's education, and invest in their own educational and employment prospects.
- **Supportive Services**  
THA has two caseworkers at McCarver to help parents fulfill their program commitments.
- **School Investments**  
TPS made the considerable investment to turn McCarver into an International Baccalaureate Primary Years School. The internationally renowned IB program enriches the teaching and learning standards for faculty and students by centering education around rigor and critical engagement.
- **Third-Party Evaluation**  
A third-party evaluator tracks an array of metrics for the cohort students and parents, and for the whole school. Evaluator reports are at THA's website at [www.tacomahousing.net](http://www.tacomahousing.net).

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES HIGHLIGHTS

*“The program gave us the stability for the last five years. Through having a housing program, I was able to finish a year-long treatment. The next year, I graduated and got my high school diploma, and then I got a job I’ve been working for the last two years. Last year, I started back to school to get my associate’s in human services and applied science. It makes quite a difference on my children’s academics, being stable and sound.”*

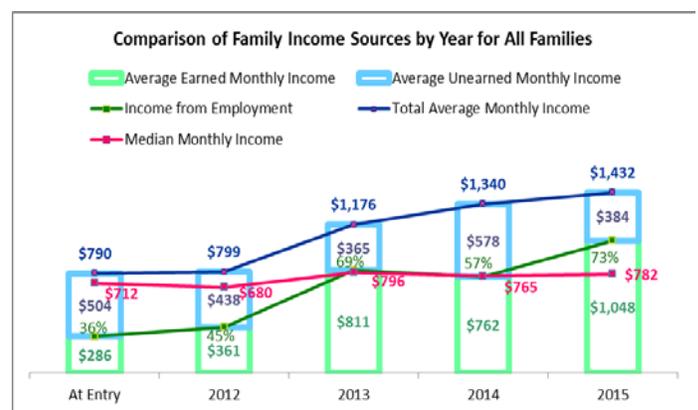
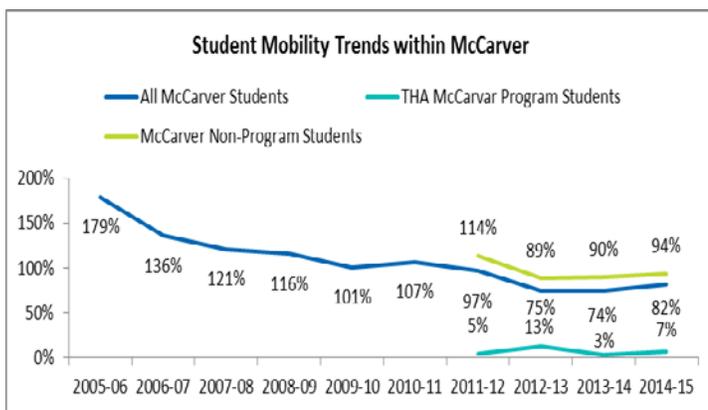
*- Crystal Olson, former ESHAP participant.*

- **Transient Rates Decreased**

McCarver’s annual transient rate declined between 15% - 30% throughout Year 1 and Year 5 of the program.

- **Earned Income Increased**

The average earned income of cohort families doubled over five years.



- **School Attendance Improved**

The number of McCarver students missing more than one day of school per month reduced, and by Year 5, student attendance passed the target rate at 92%.

- **Reading Scores Improved**

The portion of the cohort students reading at grade level went up 33 percentage points in the first year, nearly three times the gain of comparable cohorts in Tacoma.

## PROGRAM EXPANSION

These positive results encouraged THA and TPS to turn the program in 2017 from a pilot to a permanent offering at McCarver. Also, they plan to expand the program in 2018 to other Tacoma elementary schools with high rates of student transience because of family homelessness. They will adjust the program model to account for what they learned from the pilot.

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