

We all hope that if we fall on hard times, we will have the support we need to regain stability. Services that allow people to weather a short- or long-term disability-- whether physical or mental health-related-- can mean the difference between living in a safe, healthy home or becoming homeless.

Washington state's **Housing & Essential Needs (HEN)** program ensures that extremely low-income people diagnosed with significant physical disabilities or mental illnesses can meet their basic needs and address their disability while they are unable to work. It also means that a short-term disability won't result in long-term homelessness. HEN provides rent and utility assistance, as well as access to health and hygiene items.

> **A robust investment in HEN would result in thousands of people being safely housed**

The HEN program has not received a funding increase since its inception in 2011. Across the state counties are incurring waitlists as eligible individuals cannot access HEN due to funding limitations. An **investment of \$69 million** would ensure Washington state takes advantage of this highly effective program to ensure low-income people with disabilities remain housed.

> **HEN is a highly effective investment that promotes long-term stability**



HEN has a built-in transition to stability

The HEN program is a critical, temporary support that prevents long-term homelessness. By design, the program either transitions low-income individuals back to work at the conclusion of their short-term disability, or to federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by way of the state's Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) assistance.



HEN is a front line investment in our state's behavioral health system

An investment in housing stability provides essential support necessary to address a temporary disability, especially mental health needs. **The vast majority (81%) of those served by HEN have a behavioral health need they are working to address.**



HEN clients receive additional wraparound support through the Medicaid Transformation Waiver

HEN/ABD clients are a target population of our state's Foundational Community Supports offered through the Medicaid Transformation Waiver. This strategic combination of federal dollars provides tenancy support services and employment services to HEN clients.



HEN provides flexibility to support client success

HEN has the unique flexibility of allowing clients to use their assistance to rent from a family member, or a room or apartment on the private market. This flexibility provides a wide array of options-- even within challenging rental markets-- to support the individual needs of a clients' transition to stability.



The HEN program helped me qualify for an apartment despite credit history challenges and a scattered rental history. Getting off the streets and into my own space greatly improved my depression, anxiety, and motivation in engaging in healthy activities. This has improved my quality of life and helped me to establish independence.

[S]ince moving into my own apartment I have been able to volunteer at a shelter for homeless families, working as support staff in their central kitchen. I recently applied for a regular full time position at that same shelter.

-Nicholas, advocate and HEN recipient