building a stronger
COMMUNITY
2016 impact report
hopelink
Vision

A community free of poverty

Mission

Hopelink’s mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community; we help people make lasting change.
“If it wasn’t for Hopelink, where would I be? I’d be waking up in my car, trying to figure out where we’ll be spending the next night. Now I have so much ... a warm house, stability, I feel safe ... and that’s the main thing for me—the safety.”

—TAPEKA LEWIS, HOPELINK CLIENT
Introduction

Since 1971, Hopelink has taken the lead in tackling the issues that prevent low-income families and individuals from achieving stability and gaining the tools and skills they need to exit poverty.

With a focus on lasting solutions, our unique approach to change addresses multiple needs that face individuals and families; weaving a tapestry of support that begins with the essential needs of food, shelter, heat and access to healthcare, and continues the journey from poverty through adult education, help finding a job, transportation, family development and financial literacy.

Serving the needs of 64,000 people every year is only the beginning of Hopelink’s commitment to building a stronger community. Through our Campaign for Lasting Change, we are expanding our ability to transform lives; doubling the number of individuals receiving the tools to exit poverty, ensuring that more people will receive healthy food from our food banks, and providing more housing for those who are homeless. Through targeted, sustainable capital investments, we will permanently increase our capacity to serve our community.

This report summarizes our impact over all of our program areas in fiscal year 2016. And as we look toward a future of helping even more of those in need, we are grateful for the ongoing support of so many people—from our community partners and donors to the more than 3,600 Hopelink volunteers who spent more than 62,000 hours helping people and changing lives last year.

Lauren Thomas, Hopelink CEO
Hopelink’s Area of Impact

Clients Served by Service Center
- Shoreline: 3,010
- Kirkland/Northshore: 7,305
- Bellevue: 5,991
- Redmond: 4,096
- Sno-Valley: 1,549

Hopelink Housing
- Duvall Place: Duvall 8 units
- Avondale Park: Redmond 59 units
- Hopelink Place: Bellevue 20 units
- Kenmore Place: Kenmore 11 units
- Heritage Park: Bothell 15 units

Transportation Services
- DART Transit: 936,734 rides
- Medicaid Transportation: 43,944 riders
- Mobility Management: 4,750 clients

63,700
People served

275
Hopelink staff

3,664
Community volunteers

62,398
Volunteer hours donated by community members

Hopelink Transportation Services cover all of King and Snohomish counties.
Theory of Change

Hopelink’s Theory of Change visually demonstrates the goals and objectives of its services within the community.

Hopelink addresses basic needs—such as food and shelter—in order to help people in crisis attain stability, while also ensuring that those at risk of losing stability have the support they need to remain secure. For families and individuals in crisis, eliminating the stresses of homelessness and hunger is an essential first step in easing the sometimes debilitating effects of poverty; enabling family members to focus on the next steps required to exit poverty. For those at risk of hunger or homelessness during times of financial hardship, providing for basic needs can prevent families and individuals from falling into crisis.

Hopelink helps clients acquire the tools, skills and knowledge that will help them exit poverty and permanently change their lives. Because those who turn to Hopelink for help are not earning a living wage (the amount of income necessary in order to live without any financial assistance), Hopelink programs are geared toward helping clients exit poverty by focusing on increasing their income, improving their employment potential, maintaining stable housing and, when appropriate, advancing their education.

Healthy Individuals and Families

Hopelink’s Theory of Change Model

STABLE
Basic Needs Secure

Food & Nutrition
Housing
Health, Safety & Well-being
Basic Financial Resources

EQUIPPED TO EXIT POVERTY
Resilient | Employable | Resource Adequate

Children Safe & Thriving
Legal Problems Mitigated
Debt & Credit Management
Social Capital & Connections
Educated & Life Skilled

Mobility (transportation)

Warmth (heat & clothing)

Job & Life Skilled

DIRECT SERVICES & CONNECTIONS TO RESOURCES
Community Impact of All Hopelink Programs

More than 600,000 people live within Hopelink’s service area, and of those, more than 86,000 are living in poverty. In 2016 Hopelink provided services to 63,700 clients, of which 21,641 (9,602 households) were assisted through community services. A total of 43,994 clients were helped though Medicaid transportation and 4,750 received guidance with navigating the public transportation system in our region.

Family Income

95% of families served through all Hopelink programs earn less than $33,000

The level of income required for a family of four to be economically self-sufficient in Snohomish County is $68,000. It is $75,000 in King County. More than 95 percent of families of all sizes served by Hopelink have an income of less than $33,000.
Hopelink Programs

**Food Assistance**
Food banks provide healthy fresh and shelf-stable foods, while classes offer nutritional education.

**Housing**
Programs include emergency family shelter and long-term housing.

**Energy Assistance**
Provides energy assistance grants to help with home heating costs.

**Emergency Financial Assistance**
Provides funds to mitigate short-term financial crises.

**Transportation**
Medicaid transportation; off-route bus access and assistance with public transportation.

**Employment Services**
Helps clients to develop the skills needed to find work.

**Adult Education**
Classes prepare clients for the workforce or adult learning.

**Financial Literacy**
Classes and coaching on budgeting, credit, bill paying, debt repayment, savings, and financial recovery.

**Family Development**
Case managers work with families to address multiple long-term needs.
Hopelink Transportation

Hopelink’s transportation services provide reliable and affordable access to travel, which is a critical tool in ensuring stability and providing continuous support to help clients exit poverty. The three programs—DART, Medicaid Transportation and Mobility Management – ensure that clients are able to connect to vital services and support programs that include education, employment and medical care.
Demographics of Transportation Clients

The first section of this impact report focuses on the demographics of the clients who access our transportation programs, and presents the outcomes of those programs.
2016 Results: Transportation

**Services that help clients achieve stability and exit poverty**

**DART TRANSIT (DEMAND AREA RESPONSE TRANSIT)**
Through a contract with King County Metro, Hopelink provides public transit to the general public. DART buses operate on a fixed schedule, but one that has more flexibility than regular Metro Transit; the mini buses can go off regular routes to pick up and drop off passengers in service areas defined by Metro. Standard public transit fare applies to this service.

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT**
Providing education and resources through three travel training programs in King County, the Hopelink mobility management team helps people navigate transportation programs in our region. The programs are geared toward low-income clients who speak little English, veterans, students and people with disabilities.

In addition, the mobility management team manages two websites that connect veterans and other clients to transportation resources—Vets-Go.com and FindARide.org—and also supports the King County Mobility Coalition in multi-agency coordination projects to improve mobility for everyone.
Medical Facility Partnerships

The Medicaid transportation team helps meet the transportation needs of patients at various medical facilities. Transportation specialists located in the lobbies of Harborview Medical Center and Seattle Children’s Hospital work closely with hospital staff to ensure timely transportation services to Medicaid or other eligible patients as needs arise. The specialists help connect drivers and patients in busy hospital lobbies, share information about transportation options and listen to feedback about transportation services.

MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION

Through a contract with the state of Washington, Hopelink provides Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) in King and Snohomish counties for medical services covered by Medicaid. Transportation services include bus fare, gas reimbursement, cars and lift-equipped vans for wheelchair mobility. Last year’s travel needs included more than 26,000 trips for cancer care and nearly 160,000 for dialysis. More than 3,000 trips helped people with disabilities.
Hopelink’s Community Services

The following sections focus on the 21,641 clients (9,602 households) assisted through Hopelink’s community service programs, which are mostly offered through our service centers. Hopelink has five service centers that include food banks and targeted assistance programs for clients. We also have 113 housing units throughout our service area.

Family Income

Approximately 91 percent of all households served by Hopelink have an annual household income of less than $30,000 a year. For a family of four in Hopelink’s service area, the annual income needed in order to be economically self-sufficient is $75,000.
Demographics of Community Service Clients

AGE
- 20% 45-64 years
- 30% 19-44 years
- 38% ≤ 18 yo
- 12% ≥ 65 years

RACE/ETHNICITY
- 44% White
- 28% Hispanic/Latino
- 11% Asian
- 9% African American
- 2% Multi-Racial
- 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

EDUCATION LEVEL
- 32% HS or GED
- 25% 2 yr degree/some college
- 16% Bachelor Degree
- 12% 4 yr degree
- 9% Grad/Prof Degree
- 5% Certificate/Skilled Artisan
- 4% 2 yr degree
- 3% 1 yr degree
- 1% HS degree

IMMIGRANT OR REFUGEE
- 20% No HS Degree

GENDER
- 56% Female
- 44% Male

WORKING AGE EMPLOYMENT STATUS
- 63% Report being unemployed
- 37% Report being employed

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY >5 YEARS OLD
- 77% Communicate in English
- 23% Limited English

DISABILITY STATUS
- 79% Do not have a disability
- 21% Have a disability

HOUSING STATUS
- 9% Experiencing Homelessness
- 13% Home Owner
- 9% Renting
- 67% No
- 33% Yes
2016 Results: Housing

Services that help clients achieve stability

Hopelink’s housing programs help homeless families end their crisis, gain stability and obtain permanent housing. Having a roof over their heads provides a family with the stability to focus on gaining the skills and knowledge needed to exit poverty. These are acquired through case management and other essential services such as employment assistance and financial coaching.

HOUSING
In the past year, 525 clients (150 families*) were served through all of Hopelink’s housing programs.

Emergency Family Shelter
With a goal of ensuring that Hopelink families have the stability needed to obtain permanent housing, Hopelink’s emergency shelter program provides month-by-month housing. In 2016, Hopelink helped 178 clients (55 families) with emergency shelter. These families had been homeless; on the streets, in a car or another unsafe location. Of the families exiting our shelters, 70 percent achieved greater housing stability.

*Some families utilize more than one housing program
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
Hopelink’s transitional housing provides more than a place to live; it helps families gain employment, increase their income and obtain permanent housing. Hopelink housed 306 clients (84 families) in transitional housing. Of those who exited the program, 65 percent achieved permanent housing, and monthly family incomes increased by 208 percent on average from entry to exit.

PERMANENT HOUSING
Hopelink’s permanent housing helps families continue their progress toward self-sufficiency. Through one-on-one case management designed to help them achieve their goals, residents have access to the services needed to help them gain employment and continue to increase their household income. An escalated rent structure motivates families to ultimately achieve market-rate housing. In the past year, Hopelink housed 95 clients (32 families) in permanent housing. Of these, five families obtained permanent housing outside of Hopelink.
EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
A family that is facing eviction risks losing much more than a roof over their heads. Once evicted, the climb back to stability requires not only saving enough to pay rent at a new place, but coming up with both the first and last month’s rent and a security deposit. Hopelink’s Emergency Financial Assistance program helps keep families from falling through the cracks into perpetual homelessness; providing one month’s rent so that a family is able to stay in their home.
Eviction prevention assistance also protects a family’s rental history, keeps them from incurring the costs of eviction and, most importantly, ensures the stability of knowing they have a place to live.

In addition to eviction prevention, Hopelink provides limited financial support for such things as prescriptions or utility bills not covered by traditional heating assistance programs. In the past year, Hopelink helped 1,801 clients through emergency financial assistance and $489,672 was distributed to mitigate crisis and prevent eviction.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE
Ensuring that seniors, people with disabilities and others living in poverty are able to stay warm in their homes, Hopelink administers two important programs that assist low-income renters and homeowners with their winter heating and energy bills. These are the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) HELP Program, funded by Puget Sound Energy. Hopelink helped 10,609 clients and distributed $2,797,781 in heating assistance. The average energy assistance provided per household was $608.
FOOD ASSISTANCE

In Washington state, about one in seven people (13.7 percent) are considered “food insecure”—which means they do not have reliable access to a sufficient amount of affordable, nutritious food.

Food insecurity can have a devastating effect on a person’s health and wellbeing—particularly seniors, children and younger adults. People experiencing food insecurity often have to decide between basic needs, such as healthcare, or nutritionally adequate foods for their family.

Hopelink’s food assistance programs provide emergency and supplemental food to help end food insecurity for thousands in our community.

Hopelink provided a total of 2,161,134 meals, with 14,541 clients receiving food assistance.

HOPELINK HARVEST

Hopelink Harvest collects surplus produce for distribution at Hopelink food banks, increasing clients’ access to fresh, healthy food. Through partnerships with local farms, farmers markets, community gardens and individual growers, the Hopelink Harvest program provides fruits and vegetables to local families and individuals.

2,161,134 meals provided in food assistance programs

14,541 clients received food assistance

33,546 pounds of fresh produce collected for distribution at food banks
2016 Results: Adult Education

Services that Equip Clients to Exit Poverty

The Hopelink programs that provide stability continue to support clients as they focus on acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to exit poverty.

ENGLISH FOR WORK

With a goal of helping non-native English speakers gain and keep employment, Hopelink’s English as a Second Language program served 219 students in 2016. Of those who completed the course, 78 percent had significant gains in their English language skills, and 17 percent improved their employment status. Of all employed clients who completed the course, their average wage when exiting the course was $13.10 per hour.

GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (GED)

For those who dropped out of school in the United States or moved here without a high school credential, earning a GED—the equivalent of a high school diploma—is an essential step toward exiting poverty.

Hopelink’s GED program provides classes to improve math, reading, writing, social studies and science knowledge, as well as basic computer training. Support services include helping students identify and enroll in the best possible education path to help them progress toward living-wage employment and out of poverty.

A total of 85 students enrolled in Hopelink’s GED program, with 13 of them earning their GED.
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

A steady job that pays enough to meet basic living expenses can be an essential step toward achieving stability and exiting poverty. Hopelink’s employment specialists provide several key services to low-income adults seeking employment, including help preparing to find work: resume assistance, interview skills and practice, consultation on attire and, most importantly, coaching on the critical skills needed to get and keep a job.

Hopelink employment specialists also help connect clients with opportunities for employment. They work with employers to identify job opportunities, notify clients of community hiring events, and help them prepare to attend. Hopelink employment specialists guide clients through the entire job-seeking process until they achieve employment. Finally, they provide post-employment support; helping ensure success for both the client and the employer.

Hopelink provided 256 clients with employment services and 40 percent exited the program with an improved employment status. The average wage of those exiting the program employed was $14.20 per hour.

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Hopelink’s Family Development program helps families achieve stability and develop the tools and skills needed to exit poverty; guiding them as they set and achieve specific goals. Case managers work directly with families to help them map out a plan for the future; identifying goals and strategies for success.

Along with referrals to resources within Hopelink and the community, case managers provide guidance and accountability for families working to get back on their feet. The Family Development program is one of the key resources available to families who are homeless but no longer qualify for the family homelessness system because they may be staying temporarily with a friend or family member.

In 2016, Hopelink provided family development services to 545 clients (161 families). Of the families who exited the program: 84 percent of families achieved and/or maintained stable housing; 33 percent of adults improved their employment status; 34 percent of families increased their family income by at least 30 percent.
What does it mean to be equipped to exit poverty? Hopelink defines this as achieving significant progress toward four key indicators: education, employment, housing stability and income progression. We measure these outcomes for clients in our programs that equip them to exit poverty, and we look at trends across multiple programs.*

**Measuring Outcomes**

**EDUCATION**
- **29** percent of adults completed an educational goal or were pursuing an educational goal upon completion of a Hopelink program

**EMPLOYMENT**
- **47** percent of adults were employed upon completion of a Hopelink program

**HOUSING**
- **71** percent of households who completed a Hopelink program established or maintained housing stability

**INCOME**
- **40** percent of households increased their monthly income

*The measurements of success focused on 502 households and 582 adults who completed/exited a Hopelink program in 2016. The programs chosen for review were: Family Development, Housing, Employment, GED and English for Work.*
Conclusion

We are proud of our impact in the local community, and we are committed to expanding our reach to help even more people attain stability and the tools and skills they need to exit poverty.

Hopelink’s $25 million Campaign for Lasting Change—announced publically during our Reaching Out Luncheon in October 2016—will double the number of individuals who acquire the tools and skills needed to exit poverty, increase the reach of our food program by 33 percent, and ensure that more homeless families have access to housing.

The capital campaign has already enabled us to expand and renovate our Kenmore Shelter and build a new, larger Shoreline Center on the Ronald Commons site. Next up for new construction will be our Redmond Integrated Service Center, with a spring 2017 groundbreaking.

For more than 45 years, Hopelink has helped local families and individuals move from crisis to stability and out of poverty. We are strengthened by our success and driven by our commitment to continue building a stronger, more vibrant community for everyone who lives here.