



YOUTHCARE

**UNIVERSITY
DISTRICT YOUTH
CENTER FINAL
REPORT**

DIVYA P., MARY F., TOMMY N., GARY T.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Problem	1
Customer	2
Solution	3
Next Steps	5
Appendix	6
Empathy Map	6
Theory Of Change Canvas	7
System Map	8
Story in Seven Sentences	8
Digital Pamphlet (Prototype)	9



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approximately 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness every year in the U.S., representing a public health crisis of grand scale¹. Youth who experience any level of housing insecurity are more susceptible to homelessness later in life, and adds a double burden of trauma, and mental and physical health struggles¹. Helping this population move forward and thrive is an effective strategy to help improve youth's quality of life and end adult homelessness. In the University District of Seattle, youth struggle to access services on the weekends when service delivery centers are closed. Additionally, these youth must face stigma and marginalization by the UW students they share their community with. To combat this problem, we created a digital guide for the UW Greek community's philanthropy leaders that outlines a weekend service delivery table operated by their members with the goal of empowering homeless youth by providing consistent access to basic needs and capitalizing on the Greek community to reduce stigma and build community.

PROBLEM

Our official problem statement is as follows: We seek to provide weekend services (non-perishable food and hygiene items) to youth experiencing homelessness using a partnership between University of Washington students and local youth facing homelessness. We are working to address the lack of services available for youth facing homelessness in the University District on weekends, due to organizations such as the University District Youth Center (UDYC) - our partner organization - being closed. An additional problem that we are working on is to break down barriers between the youth facing homelessness and UW Greek life students who are neighbors in the University District. This problem exists due to stigma around homelessness and individuals who are facing homelessness.

The evidence we have for these problems has been gathered through anonymous interviews conducted with youth who use UDYC's services. 4 out of 6 interviewees expressed that their day-to-day activities change on weekends in comparison to weekdays due to different needs because of fewer services being open. Through interviews with students in Greek Life at UW we have been able to delve deeper into the stigmas that surround youth facing homelessness, and how that stigma creates barriers in understanding and communicating between the two groups of youth. Additionally, through conversations with our mentor in the organization, RJ Solomon, we have learned more about how service availability differs between weekdays and weekends and the necessity for increased provision on weekends.

CUSTOMER

The primary beneficiaries we hope to serve are local University District youth who are experiencing homelessness. University District youth who are experiencing homelessness face the problem of lacking weekend services and negative stigma from local communities due to factors that are mainly outside of their control. In the case of lacking weekend services, this problem mainly resulted as a product of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many service providers were forced to cut back on hours and work force due to increasing regulations on how businesses and services should be run during the pandemic and as a result many providers chose to cut services during the weekends. The other problem outside of their control that University District youth who are experiencing homelessness face is negative stigma resonating from neighboring communities. This stigma mainly results from individual's preconceived notions about homelessness that are further echo-chambered in specific communities such as the UW Greek System to the point where people in these communities believe these notions to be the truth.

Our evidence is first pulled from our mentor Rebecca "RJ" Solomon, the Housing Navigator of UDYC. According to RJ, weekend services at the UDYC have been limited to weekdays due to COVID-19 regulations. As a result she wanted us to develop a plan in order to provide services during these gaps where there is little to no service available. Additionally she mentioned that there is often hostility due to stereotypes between youth experiencing homelessness and local college communities. This sentiment of stigma between these communities was further validated by Brandon Cain, President of Theta Delta Chi, a local UW fraternity. He mentioned that from what he has seen and heard much of the greek community empathizes with the situations that local youth experiencing homelessness are going through yet overall hold negative sentiments towards them.

This population has not been able to solve these problems themselves because the problems are out of the control of these individuals. In the case of lacking weekend services, as the COVID-19 pandemic is dying down and regulations are loosening, services should begin to come back as society tries to move back to where it was before the pandemic. As a result the lack of weekend services should and can only be fixed as time goes by. In the case of negative stigma from surrounding communities, much of this problem comes from the perspectives that these communities have about youth experiencing homelessness. Therefore in order to fix this problem of negative stigma, perspectives and stances that these communities may need to be changed, yet it is hard for youth experiencing homelessness to do this themselves.





SOLUTION

Our proposal seeks to provide services for youth experiencing homelessness at these critical moments where youth may not have access to the resources that they need. Our solution is a digital guide (see appendix) intended for the University of Washington Greek community's philanthropy leaders. The guide outlines costs, timelines, and benefits of a weekend service delivery table operated by Greek members with the goal of empowering and improving the quality of life of homeless youth by providing consistent access to basic needs. Additionally, this solution capitalizes on the resources of the Greek community to reduce stigma and build community.

This solution will help the problem by providing tangible and intangible resources to youth experiencing homelessness. Tangible resources include hygiene products like toothbrushes and toothpaste, nonperishable food, clothing for inclement weather protection, and power strips for phone charging. Intangible resources include a sense of community and belonging between peers and UW Greek students and a reduction in stigma that feeds into negative stereotypes and interactions outside of the weekend service space.

In our theory of change (see appendix), we stated that to measure the success of our solution we would track:

- How many youth use the services each week
- How many youth return in consecutive weeks
- How consistent service use by youth results in improved quality of life
- How consistent service use by youth results in a reduction in the number of negative interactions with UW students and the Greek community
- Analyzing our success implies there are labor hours available in the Greek community or in UDYC to gather and analyze data.

Evidence that our solution will help the problem comes from multiple rounds of feedback and changes to our solution to ensure it is the most appropriate for our target audience.

Our original solution was a weekend service table that provided only hot meals purchased using UW students' dining hall account funds. Our idea was to build community and serve youth experiencing homelessness through cooperation with UW students.

Our feedback on this idea from Randi Eseltine and RJ Solomon included the question of who would organize this service, since UDYC was unable to provide extra labor on the weekends. Further, they critiqued the extra burden of keeping hot meals at a safe temperature for serving youth, and the complications with transporting the meals from campus dining halls to the service table.

SOLUTIONS CONT.

We improved on this original solution by switching to non-perishable food and adding hygiene and other related service products like charging strips and clothing. Additionally, feedback from RJ and Randi gave us the idea of incorporating the Greek community. Outside feedback on our solution has come from multiple sources including:

- **Rebecca “RJ” Solomon, Housing Navigator, UDYC:** Her feedback included introducing the idea of cooperating with the Greek community in our solution. She acknowledged the stigma faced by youth experiencing homelessness and the opportunity for the Greek community to directly participate in reducing stigma and building community. Further, she suggested adding power strips and clothing to the hygiene items offered at our table, and that surveying UW students would be a good way to gauge their interest and attitudes.
- **Randi Eseltine, Director of Community Engagement, UDYC:** Randi gave us feedback in the early stages of our project. She strengthened our service delivery approach by offering alternatives to our original proposal that only included hot meals.
- **Current members of the Greek community:** Their feedback included information on the structure of the Greek system’s philanthropy, and their interest in adopting this proposal into their philanthropy efforts. Greek community members approved of the in-person, recurring opportunities provided by this solution, as opposed to remote fundraising, and liked the possibility and feasibility of this proposal to help local youth. Additional feedback included ideas for distributing our proposal to the Greek community by attending a chapter or all Greek meeting.
- **Youth who use UDYC:** From a written survey distributed anonymously by RJ Solomon, we gathered feedback from six youth experiencing homelessness. To incentivize participation, we provided each person with a \$25 Visa gift card provided by the GCIL program. We changed our survey after the first 3 respondents, because “hygiene services” was defined as “showers and running water”, which we found could be misleading since our proposal was not able to provide that service. We updated hygiene services to say “toiletries such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, wet wipes, tampons/pads”. From the surveys, youth reported that their top four weekend services in no particular order are WiFi, Hygiene (defined as showers and eventually amended to toiletries), meals, and charging stations. Additionally, youth report that COVID-19 has not significantly changed their access to services.
- **UW students:** From a digital survey², we gained insight into current attitudes and beliefs about our proposal and youth experiencing homelessness. From the 14 survey responses, 79% were current Greek community members, and 79% identified as Caucasian/White. Almost 29% of respondents expressed they were “Very Likely” to participate in our proposal, and another 36% said they were “Somewhat Likely”. In a qualitative section of our survey, respondents expressed great interest in helping the community of those experiencing homelessness. Upon describing our proposal, respondents stated it sounded like gratifying volunteer work. The main reason respondents expressed reservations was due to the large individual time commitment of the weekend service table.

NEXT STEPS

In order to test the effectiveness of our solution, we would plan to conduct pre- and post-interviews with the clients who utilize the weekend services as well as the Greek Life students who volunteer to provide the services. For clients who use the service, the post-interview would focus on the usefulness of services provided, relations with the members of Greek Life, and potential for improvement. For UW students who run the service, the post-interview will focus on ease of running the service, relations with the clients who use the service, changes in perceptions of homelessness, and potential for how to make the service better for them and the clients. The purpose of the pre-interview in addition to the post-interview is to understand if the weekend service pop-up truly impacted individuals in the way we hoped. If we asked participants to do a pre- and post-survey after each weekend they attend the service then we could get information over a long period of time as well for the return participants.

Regarding the financial sustainability of this solution, our aim was to leave the least burden on UDYC staff. Therefore, when we interviewed fraternity and sorority members we discussed the feasibility of them being responsible for the supplies to limit the financial burden. The fraternity president we interviewed mentioned that his fraternity could receive community donations and grants from national organizations in order to get the supplies necessary to make the weekend pop-up happen. At the same time, the sorority member stated that many of the houses support local programs that do these types of events by volunteering and using their funds from their donors. They both believed that this was an event that they would be able to run and support over a continued period of time.

Some additional feedback that we would have regarding our solution is from additional members of Greek life. We want this additional feedback in order to ensure that our solution is one that Greek community members will commit to for a sustained period of time. In order to get this feedback we had a plan to present our solution to the UW Panhellenic council at their monthly meetings. This would advertise our proposed solution to many fraternities and sororities at once and get us the widest exposure possible. Other feedback we'd like to get is from youth who use UDYC. While we interviewed them on their major needs in order to come up with our solution, we did not get their opinions on our proposed solution specifically. A plan to get this feedback would be to create another short survey and distribute it to clients of UDYC to determine their impressions of the solution and how useful they believe it will be.

In order for UDYC to implement the proposed solution, the next steps would be for our mentor RJ or someone else within the organization to reach out to the fraternity and sorority members we interviewed to form a formal connection. By having the organization itself reach out, there would be a solidified agreement between the two groups allowing the process of implementation to begin. Once UDYC reaches out to the members of Greek Life, the fraternities and sororities would need to begin fundraising, collecting supplies, and coordinating volunteers for the weekend pop-up. Once Greek Life students have begun bringing those things together, then advertising the pop-up and spreading the word could begin.

This would be done through distributing flyers to UDYC and other organizations in the U-District to get the widest exposure possible. By following these next steps we fully believe that our weekend pop-up to provide needed services can be a sustainable way to benefit the community of youth facing homelessness in UDistrict as well as breaking the barriers between UW Students and UDYC clients due to stigma.

APPENDIX

Empathy Maps:

- Youth Experiencing Homelessness: <https://prezi.com/view/M9KqkJSCITSFZHB0h6OY/>

Empathy Map: Youth Experiencing Homelessness

UDYC

1 WHO are we empathizing?
 Who is the person we want to understand? Youth ranging from early teens to young adults
 What is the role in their situation or what is the situation?
 - Left their homes and became homeless
 - May be in dire need of supplies such as food, warmth, hygiene
 - Might have experienced a lot of trauma in their early stages from childhood
 - He, she or they might not have connections to relatives at all
 - Limited access to resources in order to achieve the dreams that one might have

2 What do they need to DO?
 What do they want or need to get done?
 The group has to find shelter and supplies for one to survive. If successfully doing so, one might want to be educated by doing their homework and study if still in school. If not, one might need to find a job to make money or make connections to other adults providing homeless services.
 What decisions do they need to make? How will we know they were successful?
 One might have to take risks of finding homeless shelters far from their area and other homeless resources where other adults are willing to supply and help the homeless out. The adults can hear their background and can see their potential due to them putting their full efforts in order to survive.

3 What do they SEE?
 What do they see in the marketplace?
 Based on past research youth experiencing homelessness may see the marketplace as an entity that is very scary on the way. They may view the marketplace as a reason why they are homeless.
 What do they see in their immediate environment?
 Depending on the area that youth experiencing homelessness are in, youth experiencing homelessness may see other individuals in the same level as them in their immediate environment. Youth experiencing homelessness may see other individuals in a different way to day and so it may be hard for them to relate to other people.
 What do they see others saying and doing?
 Youth experiencing homelessness see other people who make money through the means of the day to get by. Other people who work in stores are accused of being the same as them. Youth experiencing homelessness may see other individuals as less than human.
 What are they watching and reading?
 Youth experiencing homelessness would probably be watching and reading about resources that they could get a hold of in order to improve their situation.

4 What do they SAY?
 What have we heard them say? "You never know what someone is going through, lead with compassion." "This was my only option" "Not every homeless person uses drugs" "We're just regular people"
 What can we imagine them saying? "I need help, but I don't know what to do" "I feel lost" "I feel sad" "I feel beaten down" "I feel invisible" "I feel unsafe"

5 What do they need to do?
 What do they do today? Everyday they need to get food and clean water, and stay warm and dry. On some days they might need medical services. Other days they might need to get to a new part of the city for services or to find supplies/toiletries.
 What behavior have we observed? We have observed them sitting and talking with each other, making art and playing games at the youth center, and walking outside.
 What can we imagine them doing? We can imagine them speaking with their case managers about next steps for finding housing. I can imagine them going to sleep at night on nights when it's raining, seeking food and talking with people they know.

6 What do they hear?
 What are they hearing others say?
 What are they hearing from friends?
 What are they hearing from colleagues?
 What are they hearing second-hand?
 Negative stigmatization of youth who are experiencing homelessness is very prevalent in society today. They may hear others in society say things like "that decision making and laziness is what brought them here". Therefore it is critical for people who understand the many unique circumstances and factors that bring individuals to homelessness to empathize with their situation and uplift them through their tough times. This is especially important for close friends and colleagues who can have a direct impact in assisting an individual experiencing homelessness by lowering this stigma through words of motivation.

7 What do they THINK and FEEL?
 PAINS GAINS What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties? What are their wants, needs, hopes and dreams? What other thoughts and feelings might motivate their behavior?
 Their fears, frustrations, and anxiety revolve around the housing instability they face. Daily things that the housing secure take for granted such as safety of themselves and their possessions, where they will get their next meal and shower, and where they will spend each night. They want to get jobs so that they can save money and lift themselves out of their current situations. They want to be seen as people and de-stigmatized because their situation has been caused by a system that perpetuates inequity and could last anyone to homelessness at anytime.

- UW Students: <https://prezi.com/view/OQbXZtL2wYaBp10chlLB/>

Empathy Map: UW Greek Students

UDYC

1 WHO are we empathizing?
 Who is the person we want to understand?
 - UW Students that want to take in part in helping out the homeless and why are they doing it.
 What is the role in their situation or what is the situation?
 - Taking initiative of organizing events to help out the homeless.
 - Met up with some homeless and listened to their stories.
 - Meeting with other people in groups who want to combat the stigma and make plans

2 What do they need to DO?
 UW Students can take in part of creating events that may combat homelessness.
 - One can do their own research on how homelessness happens in the first place.
 - Be empathetic towards the homeless youth.
 What do they want or need to get done?
 - Volunteering programs that will help out the homeless and in dire need of support.
 What decisions do they need to make? How will we know they were successful?
 Anything that will help support the homeless even if it's a little thing

3 What do they SEE?
 What do they see in the marketplace?
 They see other housed and unhoused youth in the U-District when walking to class, and to other places in the U-District.
 What do they see in their immediate environment?
 They see other Greek and non-Greek students, they see unhoused people on the streets in varying degrees of distress, they see evidence of poverty and affluence.
 What do they see others saying and doing?
 They see others talking part in their community by donating their time or money, they see others speak about social justice issues locally and abroad, they see others spreading myths and lies about unhoused people.
 What are they watching and reading?
 They are watching movies and television shows that may or may not attempt to combat stigma surrounding unhoused youth. They are reading academic writing for class that may or may not address homelessness. They are reading social media posts about social justice issues like homelessness.

4 What do they SAY?
 What have we heard them say?
 What can we imagine them saying?
 - Usually matches what his or her peers say whether it is positive or negative comments
 - Positive Comments Consists of trying to approach the homeless such as "what should we do" or "I feel so bad for them"
 - Comments could be negative that factors in whether one is knowledgeable or had a terrible experience with a homeless individual

5 What do they need to do?
 - Actively engage in their community and fulfill philanthropy requirements
 - Walk home from class, finish their homework, eat and see their friends.
 What behavior have we observed?
 - Congregating in groups on their lawns for outdoor activities, attending classes and sporting events, participating in volunteer work
 What can we imagine them doing?
 - seeking support in the UW community, working and saving money, giving time and energy to their houses

6 What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties?
 - Theft or robbery from the homeless
 - People not stepping up to lend a helping hand
 What are their wants, needs, hopes and dreams?
 - Hopefully eliminating homelessness and developing a community that includes unhoused youth
 - Seeing others succeed and be able to have opportunities to create something happen in our world
 What other thoughts and feelings might motivate their behavior? What do they THINK and FEEL?
 PAINS GAINS
 - Most likely feel uncomfortable around homeless people that may be caused by negative experiences
 - Others might want to give a slight helping hand by giving small amounts of supplies or money if one can spare if one went deep into how homeless got to the situation in the first place
 - Other factors could be inferring to be in the homeless person's shoes and being able to empathize with them

7 What do they hear?
 What are they hearing others say?
 What are they hearing from friends?
 What are they hearing from colleagues?
 What are they hearing second-hand?
 - It can either be positive empathic comments or negative comments before knowing about the situation
 Positive Comments:
 "I feel so bad for them"
 "How can we do to help?"
 "Is there anything we can do?"
 - Negative comments can vary depending on the person's negative experiences and stereotypes about the homeless

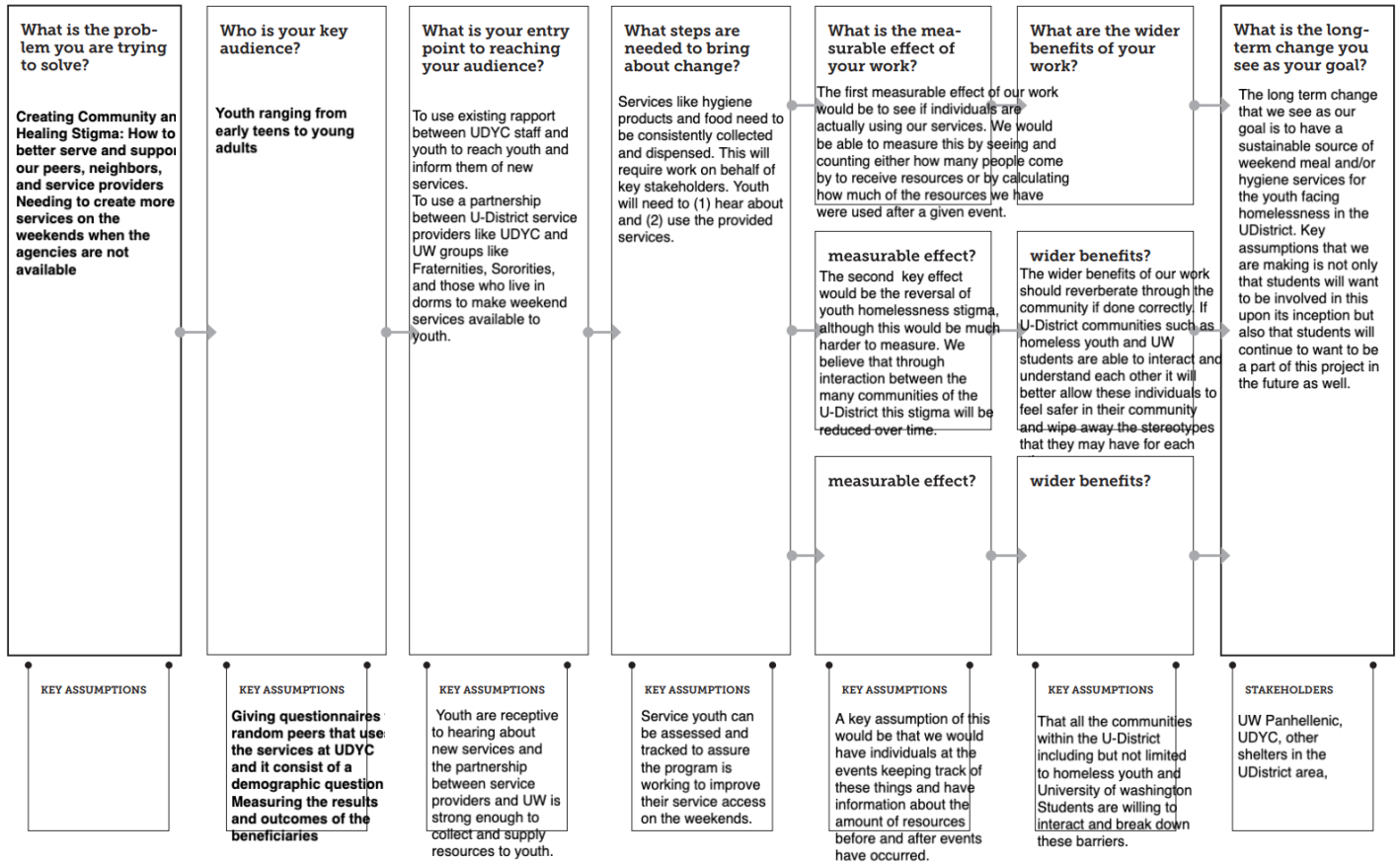
APPENDIX CONT.

Theory of Change:



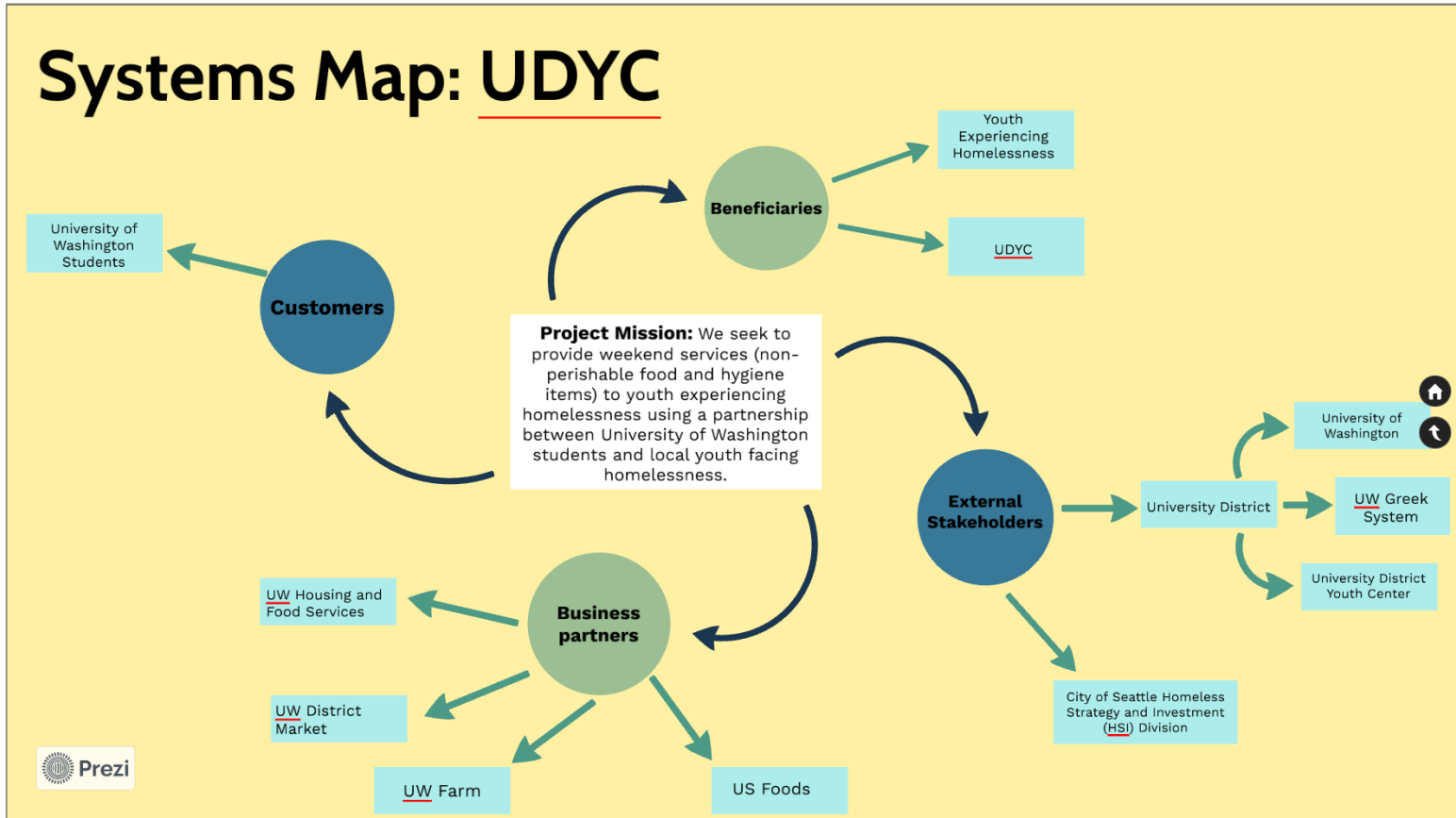
I want to clarify my priorities
by defining my goals and the path to reach them

THEORY OF CHANGE



APPENDIX CONT.

Systems Map:

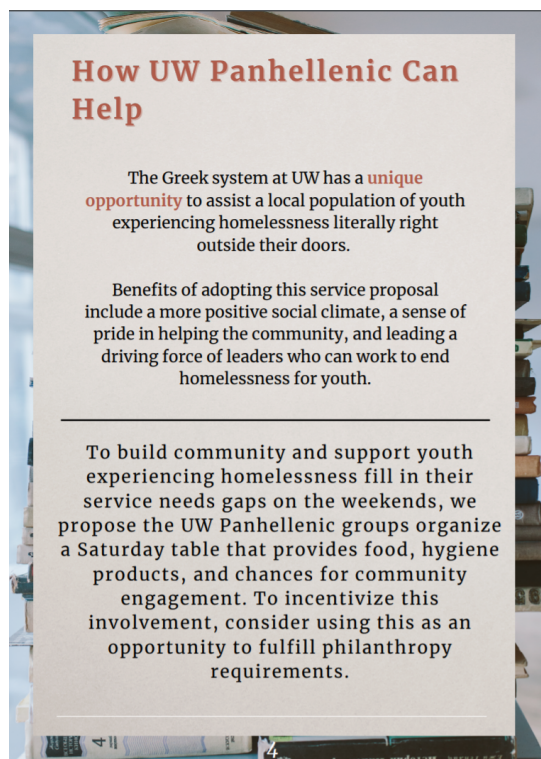
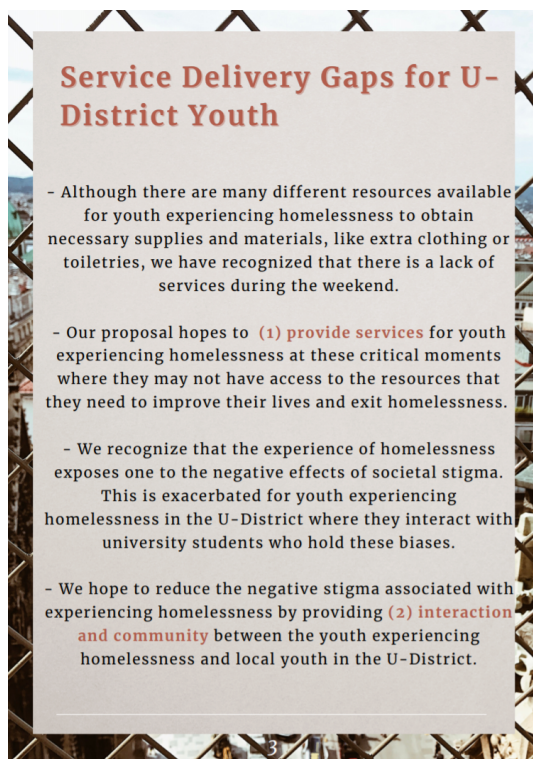
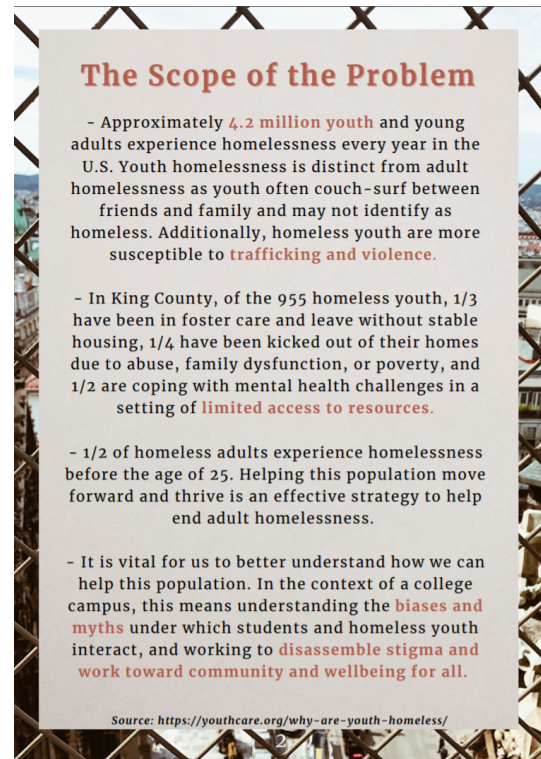
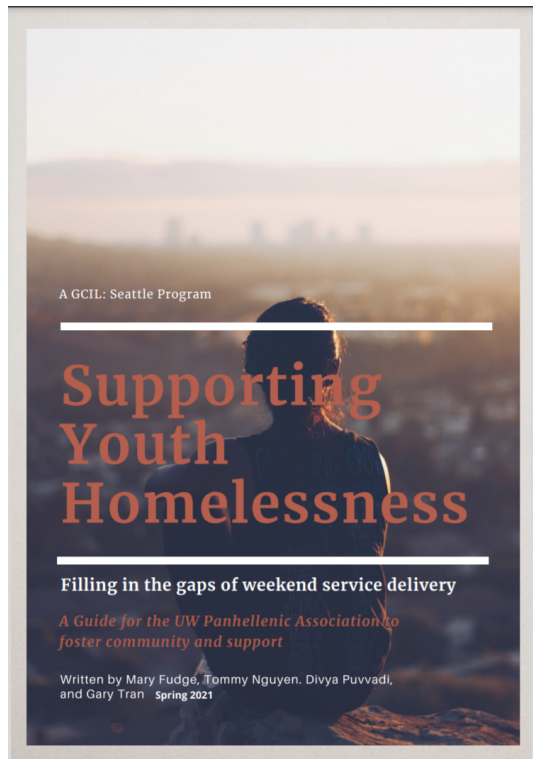


Story in Seven Sentences:

- (1) Once upon a time, on a rainy May day, a young person named Kai was walking down the street in the University District in Seattle, Washington, passing University of Washington students on their way to class.
- (2) Kai is a person experiencing homelessness and every day they must find shelter, food, water, and warmth, which are not consistently available in the U-District.
- (3) Service delivery centers like the University District Youth Center are closed on the weekends, so Kai is unable to access their drop-in services like food, water, showers, daytime shelter, and opportunities to interact with other youth experiencing homelessness.
- (4) Until one day, Kai reads a flyer at UDYC that advertises a new outdoor weekend service table provided by the UW Greek system that provides free hygiene products, non-perishable foods, clothes, power strips, and space to interact with housed and unhoused youth from the U-District.
- (5) Because of this, Kai and their peers visit the table every weekend to use the provided services, interact with other unhoused youth and build community with the UW Greek students.
- (6) And ever since then, Kai's consistent access to these resources and community on the weekend has improved their quality of life, in addition to reducing stigma and bias about homelessness among the UW Greek community.
- (7) Because of this increase in comfort, Kai now has the mental and physical energy to focus on attaining steady employment, increasing their chances of finding housing and exiting homelessness forever.

APPENDIX CONT.

Supporting Youth Homelessness digital pamphlet:



APPENDIX CONT.

Supporting Youth Homelessness digital pamphlet:

Setup, event structure, activities

Example Materials and Costs:
(Based on Amazon Prices)

Foldable Table ~ \$50
Transportable Canopy ~ \$100
400 count Nametags ~ \$10
100 count Toothbrush ~ \$20
144 count 0.6oz Toothpaste ~ \$27
56 count Snack pack cookies ~ \$15, or by donation
40 count Chips ~ \$18, or by donation
24 count Water ~ \$4, or by donation
Power cord and power strips
Clothing: by donation
Bluetooth Speaker ~ \$30

Many of these expenses are one-time and reusable, some may also not be necessary or already available. This is an example of the possible costs.

Set Up
Volunteers will need to locate a suitable location with a lot of space to set up the canopy and table. This would be best placed outside of an existing service center to make it easy for youth to locate. All services will be provided at the table under the canopy, while activities will be led outside and around this central location.

5

Setup, event structure, activities continued

Minimum 5 volunteers, or as many as would like to participate

- 1 greeter that directs youth
- 2 people working on handing out services
- 2 people stocking the service table

1. Youth will first interact with the greeter who will assist them in finding the services they need that day.
2. Youth will move in a line through the canopy where they will be provided with their desired services.
3. Volunteer staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner prioritizing friendliness, openness, and sincere compassion.

- Ideally volunteers will wear nametags and return week-to-week whereby they eventually build relationships with returning youth (i.e. remembering their names and their services of choice).
- Once the event is over volunteers will disassemble the area and bring the materials to a proper storage location.

6

Sample Saturday Timeline

- **Friday:** event organizer gathers service supplies for the next day
- **Saturday: 9:00 AM :** *Volunteers meet and gather the necessary supplies from Greek house storage area*
- **9:30 AM :** *Volunteers walk to service site and begin set-up at the event spot*
- **10:00 AM - 2:00 PM :** *Handing out of services, allowing youth to linger to charge their devices, eat, talk. etc.*
- **2:00 PM - 2:30 PM :** *clean-up and tear-down of table and canopy. Supplies get walked back to Greek house storage*

7

Sample Recruiting Poster

BE A FORCE FOR GOOD

Join Chi-Omega in a unique opportunity to support youth experiencing homelessness in the U-District

To learn more contact
Jon Snow at
jsnow24@uw.edu

*FULFILLS QUARTERLY PHILANTHROPY HOURS!



APPENDIX CONT.

Supporting Youth Homelessness digital pamphlet:

