

Help Me Grow Pierce County Pilot

A five-year pilot to develop a comprehensive system of services and support for families of children age birth to five years old.



Pilot goals.

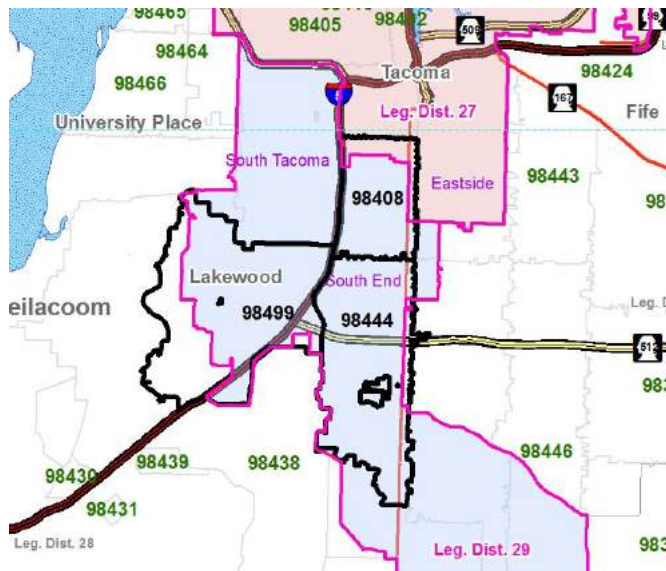
1. Reduce dependency filings for children birth to three in target zip codes.
2. Gain population information on services needed and offered.

Why invest in this pilot?

The pilot area includes three jurisdictions: City of Lakewood, City of Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County. The zip codes selected for the pilot are worrisome on many measures of community safety and health. **Each year about 1,400 child dependency filings are submitted**, many in the child's first week of life. In addition, income levels are low, housing stock is of poor quality and unemployment is high.

Prevention is a smart investment.

In October 2017, in Pierce County, the average cost for children under age 5 in out of home care was \$927 per month; a total monthly cost of \$412,733. This includes children under age 5 in foster and kin care (N=445) for the entire month. This cost does not include payments through TANF for relatives caring for children, some services for parents, parent-child visitation costs, court costs, attorney costs, or social worker salaries.



Pilot Area Zip Codes:

- 98408 Tacoma, Fern Hill
- 98499 Lakewood, Springbrook
- 98444 Parkland

	Poverty Rate	Low Birth Weight
WA State	12.7%	6.37%
98408	16.3%	7.13%
98444	22.0%	7.52%
98499	24.5%	8.07%

“Washington State needs new strategies to work upstream to solve heartbreaking problems. Pierce County has seen a significant increase in children being removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect. Intervention that happens late through the court system traumatizes fragile children even further. The Help Me Grow Pierce County Pilot can help us develop better tools to strengthen families, support parents and keep children safe.”

*Honorable Kitty-Ann van Doorninck
Pierce County Superior Court*

Who We Are.

Project Child Success is a collaboration of more than 100 community organizations, government agencies, and funders working in Pierce County. Key partners include Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Pierce County Juvenile Courts, DSHS Children's Administration, United Way 211, Pierce County Accountable Communities of Health, as well as Within Reach, the lead agency for Help Me Grow in Washington state.

How It Will Work.

This pilot will follow a nationally recognized model called Help Me Grow to use existing resources to identify vulnerable children, link families to services, support children's healthy development and strengthen community connections. The four core components are – centralized access, family and community outreach, data collection and analysis, and child health provider outreach.

Community partners will identify pregnant women and families of young children in the target zip codes. Providers will assess families for protective and risk factors. A centralized access point will be used to refer and connect families to community resources. A research partner will measure outcomes. By strengthening protective factors and reducing risks, Help Me Grow will strengthen the infant-parent bond and the parent support systems that can improve health, keep families together, children safe, and communities strong.

Performance Measures.

- Reduce the number of dependencies filed on children age birth to five in our pilot area.
- Collect and analyze population based information on protective factors.
- Reduce the percent of low and very low birth weight babies.
- Improve health outcomes for children.
- Promote and normalize breastfeeding.
- Reduce dependency costs through fewer placements.



Request.

Washington State has identified Help Me Grow as an effective model. **We request \$300,000 in the 2018 supplemental budget to launch the first year of the Help Me Grow Pierce County Pilot.** In the planning year, 2018-2019, we will:

- Convene a leadership team.
- Understand each neighborhood's unique needs, existing assets, and service gaps.
- Choose screening tools to assess protective and risk factors for each family.
- Develop a plan to strengthen families using protective factors.
- Analyze costs for launch of a centralized access point.
- Develop a marketing and outreach plan for connecting with families.
- Develop a provider training plan.
- Create a comprehensive budget for Year 2 – 5 of the pilot.
- Create a sustainable public-private funding model.
- Recommend effective and culturally-grounded strategies to roll out from 2019-2022.

This request covers the first year of planning. Project implementation will require additional support.