



Pearl Jam

reveals where revenue from much-hyped Home Shows is going

By Ashley Archibald | October 10th, 2018



[Click to view all images](#)

Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder, left, and Stone Gossard. Photo by Matthew S. Browning

They came. They rocked. They made a deep moral and financial commitment to prevent and fight homelessness in Washington state.

Oh yeah.

In early October, Pearl Jam delivered a final recap of their summer endeavor to raise awareness (and funds) to fight homelessness. The \$10.8 million raised by the Home Shows Initiative with the help of local partners in August will target recently homeless households and homeless youth, as well as fund more than 100 existing organizations that work with homeless folks throughout Washington state.

Approximately \$1.3 million will go to nonprofits selected by Pearl Jam with guidance from a 19-member advisory group. That revenue will be channeled specifically toward diversion and efforts with All Home King County and A Way Home Washington to fight youth homelessness.

The bulk of the money — roughly \$7.8 million — will be divvied up among local organizations. Recipients include programs with established brands, such as Mary's Place and DESC and groups such as the Elizabeth Gregory House, whose work is crucial but less well known. Real Change is also a recipient of these funds.

The remaining \$1.7 million will be granted based on future need.

According to the band, the Home Shows Initiative wasn't just a project to play music and remind a weary region about the crisis of homelessness. It was meant to build empathy and community around the issue.

"We appreciate the support from Pearl Jam and are committed to following the advice found in their hit song 'Even Flow', using our funds to ensure no one in Seattle sleeps 'on a pillow of concrete' or lacks the life-changing help they need."

*Robert Friant
Corporation for Supportive
Housing
Pearl Jam Home Shows
Grant Recipient*

"The Home Shows initiative is about bringing the issue of homelessness closer to all of us — increasing our understanding of a complex issue, our empathy for our neighbors experiencing homelessness, and our resolve for working together," said Pearl Jam guitarist, co-founder and lifelong Seattle resident Stone Gossard in a press release



The Home Shows raised \$10.8 million, the bulk of which goes to organizations that work with people experiencing homelessness. Photo By Matthew S. Browning

“We’re proud of what our city has done,” Gossard continued. “Now we need to stay inspired. There’s a lot more to do.”

The two largest efforts funded by the Home Shows Initiative are efforts around diversion and youth homelessness.

The term “diversion” describes a suite of potential responses that help people who have recently become homeless move quickly back into housing. Diversion checks all of the rhetorical boxes around the local homelessness response — “people-centered,” “Housing First” — but in layman’s terms it’s a short-term, inexpensive way to get individuals and families back into housing and stabilized that is tailored to their individual needs.

The band wanted to invest in diversion after conversations with service providers who told them that, while diversion funds exist in the city, they’re spread out among many organizations, making it difficult and time-consuming to cobble together enough to help clients, said John Hoyt, founder of Pyramid Communications and spokesperson for the band.

The Diversion Project, launched by All Home King County and Building Changes, will train more than 300 service providers in King County how to use diversion. This will be coupled with a Flexible Fund to help people in immediate need of support. The Home Shows and Building Changes, together, will invest \$1 million in the Flexible Fund.

All Home and other nonprofits already used the diversion approach in King County, but the new investment will strengthen those efforts, said Kira Zylstra, interim director of All Home.

“We really haven’t had it to scale in the way that we need or want it,” Zylstra said.

The concept of a more centralized response to homelessness has gained traction with the region’s largest funders in recent years. Together, the city of Seattle, United Way and King County have tried to focus their spending through competitive bidding and high-performance criteria, reducing the complexity and increasing the efficiency of the overall homelessness response system.

The second initiative, a coordinated push to end youth homelessness, has also been popular in the past. In this case, The Home Shows are investing \$500,000 in All Home’s effort to ensure that every young person in the county has a home by 2020, and another \$100,000 in A Way Home Washington’s Anchor Communities initiative announced at the end of September.

That pilot program targets youth homelessness outside of the Seattle area, focusing on lesser-served parts of the state including Pierce, Spokane, Yakima and Walla Walla counties. It aims to end youth homelessness by 2022 in those communities. While the Home Shows group had planned to concentrate spending in Seattle and King County, it became clear that they needed to widen their scope through the state, Hoyt said.

On top of spending on diversion and youth homelessness, the Home Shows partners and the band will devote \$7.8 million to nearly 100 organizations that work on homelessness issues, including Real Change.

In an attempt to follow up with some of these organizations, Real Change forged into new territory. The newspaper got to break happy news.

The Home Shows partners include companies and organizations that raised money for the project and will distribute it themselves. That means that at least some of the organizations who were included on the Oct. 4 funding announcement had no idea they had money coming their way.

Ruth Herold, executive director at the Elizabeth Gregory House, was delighted to hear that her organization would be receiving money. The Elizabeth Gregory House runs a transitional housing facility and day center for homeless women.

“It’s great to know we’re being paid attention to,” Herold said.

Similarly, Jennifer Muzia, executive director of the Ballard Food Bank, said that the food bank had found out Oct. 4, the day the embargo on the press release ended, that the organization would be getting funding from the Home Shows.

“I’d just say that we are so impressed by Pearl Jam and their partners as they have done an incredible job of bringing the community together to address the issue and causes of homelessness,” Muzia wrote in an email.

The announcement of the funds comes against the backdrop of Seattle and King County’s annual budget deliberations. The Seattle City Council’s Budget Committee spent an entire day speaking with departments involved in the homelessness response on Oct. 3, making it the first time that a single, cross-departmental issue has been given this kind of attention.

When Mayor Jenny Durkan assumed office in November, she found that she couldn’t get an answer to what seemed like a simple question — how much money is spent on homelessness in the city? Officials pointed to a deep analysis produced by The Seattle Times.

This year, while departments are encouraged to cut spending in advance of a potential economic downturn, homelessness spending is increasing by roughly \$3 million. That’s not much compared to the need, or the \$47 million boost from a tax on business that the council passed and then repealed this summer.

The money from the Home Shows Initiative is a welcome boost to homelessness providers who work on shoestrings, but the initiative won’t stop at this one-time influx of cash, Hoyt said.

The new challenge: maintaining the community engagement and energy that the Home Shows fostered.

“Going forward, it’s how the Home Shows can support the effort with this great megaphone that the band and partners have,” Hoyt said.

Ashley Archibald is a Staff Reporter covering local government, policy and equity. Have a story idea? She can be reached at [ashleya \(at\) realchangenews \(dot\) org](mailto:ashleya@realchangenews.org). Follow Ashley on [Twitter](#).

Real Change is a non-profit organization advocating for economic, social and racial justice. Since 1994 our award-winning weekly newspaper has provided an immediate employment opportunity for people who are homeless and low income.