Hello,

My name is ; I care for Whatcom County and am invested in the livelihood and wellbeing of our youth and young adults.

As such, I ask that you continue your support for Whatcom’s most marginalized young people, 13-to-24 year olds by fully funding the County’s upcoming contracts with Northwest Youth Services; as one of the only agencies in Whatcom County to serve young people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, your decision to fund NWYS is deeply connected to the wellbeing of our community.

Since 1976, NWYS has been essential to the care and safety of our region; in 2023, County funds directly improved the lives of 1,205 young people through the work of NWYS.

I acknowledge that all of Whatcom County is faced with low vacancy rates, soaring rent prices, lack of affordable housing, limited behavioral health and SUD services, and increased cost of living.

On top of the above, young people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity also brave surviving outside while waiting for housing placements, limited youth-specific resources and services, no overnight shelter dedicated for young adults, [adultism](https://www.youthrights.org/understanding-adultism/), and a lack of [third spaces](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/third-places-as-community-builders/).

In this environment, NWYS fills the gap with a continuum of care that connects young people ages 13-24 with essential resources like survival supplies, shelter, and wellness and professional support, including:

* Essential supplies like food, clothing, tents, sleeping bags, and hygiene items
* Emergency shelter for ages 13-17 and family reunification
* Ground Floor drop-in center and Street Outreach
* Legal and medical support
* Care coordination and resource navigation
* Housing case management
* [Gender-affirming care](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7409qb3HLk)
* Behavioral health referrals
* Employment and education services
* Civic engagement, leadership development
* Opportunities to build community, learn life skills, and strengthen their supportive network

During this time of transition, it is vital for Whatcom County to continue investing in NWYS because they center and serve youth who have nowhere else to go. Without the anchor of a support system and safe home, unhoused young people deserve the stability and quality of care that arises from thoughtful, predictable funding.

When you vote to fully fund Northwest Youth Services, you are investing in a greater future for Whatcom County and our young people.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

[NAME]

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