

Organization Name: Dignity For Divas

Date of Interview: April 7, 2025

Organization Interviewees: Nikki Gane-Butler, Marie Stuppard

Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Veronica Law, Heidi Narayan

Application Link: <https://2025grt.softtr.app/glt-applications-detail?recordId=rec8zUKhU82xdD4UM>

Organization mission: Dignity for Divas empowers unhoused and recently housed women to reclaim their lives through the Keep the Key Initiative. By addressing the root causes of homelessness, they offer holistic programs centered on dignity, respect, and personal development. Through fostering connection and belonging, they provide essential tools, services, and support that enable healing, growth, and lasting stability.

What does the organization do? Dignity for Divas addresses the root causes of homelessness by offering holistic programs focused on dignity, respect, and personal development. They provide outreach services, a Welcome Home Program for newly housed women and children, empowerment workshops, transitional housing support, and engage in advocacy to drive systemic change.

Who does the organization serve? Dignity for Divas serves unhoused individuals in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, with a focus on women, children, and especially communities of color, domestic violence survivors, and single mothers. Their culturally responsive programs address the unique barriers faced by these groups, offering services like identity kits, mentorship, and family-centered workshops. This approach has led to a 73% housing retention rate, well above the national average.

What inequity is your organization addressing and how does the organization address it? Dignity for Divas addresses the inequities surrounding homelessness, particularly as they affect women and families, by targeting the systemic barriers that contribute to housing instability, poverty, and lack of representation. Rather than focusing solely on short-term aid, the organization takes a comprehensive, community-empowered approach to long-term change.

They address this inequity through several key strategies:

- **Policy and Systems Change:** By collaborating with local agencies and service providers, they remove policy barriers that make housing inaccessible. They streamline processes to reduce red tape and make support services more navigable for unhoused individuals.
- **Institutional Training and Partnerships:** Dignity for Divas partners with institutions to train staff in trauma-informed, client-centered approaches, helping shift service models from crisis response to long-term, sustainable solutions.
- **Leadership Development and Workforce Readiness:** Through internships and job readiness programs, participants gain professional skills and access to employment opportunities, creating pathways to economic mobility and breaking generational cycles of poverty.
- **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** The organization ensures that the voices of those with lived experience are heard and elevated. Through initiatives like the Voter Engagement Campaign, participants are empowered to influence public policy and advocate for systemic reform.
- **Innovative Programs Like Keep the Key:** This initiative combines housing navigation with support services like financial literacy, mental health care, and peer mentorship to promote housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

Overall, Dignity for Divas tackles homelessness not just as a housing issue, but as a systemic inequity rooted in policy, representation, and access to opportunity.

What are the compelling reasons to support this organization? How is this organization doing transformative work? Their holistic approach addresses both immediate needs and long-term empowerment, serving over 72,000 individuals since launch—far exceeding the benchmark of 10,000-30,000 annually for similar organizations.

What makes Dignity for Divas stand out is their comprehensive wellness support, offering monthly yoga and wellness sessions for 90 participants and regular wellness check-ins, services rarely provided by comparable organizations. They have a family centered approach, with 90% of Welcome Home participants being women with young children, and unique services like Mommy & Me workshops that are rare in shelter environments. The organization's commitment to dignity is evident in their provision of identity kits and ongoing mentorship that continues after housing placement.

With strong representation from the communities they serve—90% BIPOC board members and 80% of staff having experienced homelessness—Dignity for Divas ensures authentic understanding of client needs while working toward systemic change. Their cost-effective model (\$3,053.21 per Diva annually) delivers impact outcomes through smart, scalable operations that disrupt cycles of homelessness and poverty through integrated direct services, advocacy, and capacity-building efforts.

The organization has a holistic approach to address both immediate needs and long-term empowerment of unhoused women and children through its Keep the Key Initiative and its additional wraparound support efforts including health & wellness, empowered and family centered services.

- Significant Impact: Serving over 15,000 individuals annually through all of their classes, workshops, outreach services and housing assistance across multiple counties in Washington State.
- Focus on Marginalized Communities: Prioritizes support for women of color and survivors of domestic violence, addressing systemic inequities.
- Systemic Change: Works to disrupt cycles of homelessness and poverty through integrated direct services, advocacy, and capacity-building efforts.
- Strong Community Representation: 90% of board members are BIPOC, and over 80% of staff have experienced homelessness, ensuring authentic representation.
- Proven Success: Achieved a 73% housing retention rate for over 2 years for women that have gone through the Keep the Key Initiative

Highlight a story of impact: When Nikki founded Dignity for Divas, it came from lived experience. She knew the fear, isolation, and uncertainty of homelessness firsthand. What changed her life was one opportunity, one person who said yes and that's the foundation of this work.

One powerful example is a mother of three who came to Dignity for Divas after fleeing domestic violence, living in her car and unsure if things could ever get better. They secured her emergency shelter, helped her find housing, and welcomed her into their program, surrounding her with care and community. Over the next year, she rebuilt her life and today, she's a leader on their team and the driving force behind the Keep the Key Initiative, helping others stay housed long-term.

Her journey mirrors many others. At Dignity for Divas, they don't just provide housing, they empower transformation. Every Diva who rises proves that healing, stability, and a new beginning are always possible.

What is the organization's area of greatest need? Capacity - their workshops fill up in 7 minutes. If they could hire 1-2 more interns they would have more capacity to serve women on the waitlist and more staff to support the Welcome Home and Keep the Key programs.