

Can Housing and Other Human Needs Be Funded in the Federal Budget?

BY SHARON LEE

The Enterprise Social Investment Corporation (ESIC) Forum, *Connecting People, Creating Communities*, was held on November 4-5 in Baltimore,

Maryland. The featured keynote speaker was Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and president of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities. Jeff Donahue, president and CEO of ESIC, introduced Cohen as a pioneer in the area of socially responsible business by building Ben & Jerry's on sound business, economic and social principles.

Ben & Jerry's

Cohen discussed the growth of his company and how he got started in 1978: "We were a couple of real losers," he said, describing Jerry and himself in their younger days. "The only thing we liked doing was eating."

They contemplated going into either the bagel or homemade ice cream business. Despite having no assets, the two partners cobbled together a business plan and got an SBA loan. With \$8,000 they set up an ice cream shop in a former gas station in Burlington, Vermont and, over time, built it into a multimillion-dollar company with an annual sales volume in 1999 of over \$250 million and 700 employees.

Socially Responsible Business

Cohen described how Ben & Jerry's sold shares to the people of Vermont. One hundred percent of the milk is purchased from Vermont family farms, their ice cream containers are unbleached, and no growth hormones are used. They franchised ice cream stores to nonprofit social service agencies that offered job training, they donated money, and they purchased their brownies and other products from Greyston Bakery and other businesses with a social mission.

However, Cohen said, their business could only fund five percent of the many requests for donations—given the many unmet human needs, including poverty, health, education and homelessness. "Isn't there something business could do?" remarked Cohen. This led to Cohen setting up

Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities (BLSP) seven years ago and to his growing awareness of the power of business and its most powerful tool, its "voice."



Jeff Donahue, ESIC president and CEO, on left, with Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's. "X" marks the 15 percent of the Pentagon budget that could be reallocated to fund housing, healthcare, education and other human needs.

Budget Priorities

The social and economic problems he and other business leaders were seeing were too big to be solved without a "unified voice" to get Congress to change its budget priorities. We need to "show George the door," said Cohen. We should measure our country not by "how many we kill, but how many we clothe, house, feed and care for."

As president of

BLSP, Cohen works

with more than 700 business leaders to redirect federal budget priorities to fund social needs at no additional taxpayer expense. Cohen aptly demonstrated this to the audience by stacking Oreo cookies on top of each other to show the towering size of the Pentagon budget when compared to the very small budgets for Head Start, education, health, housing and human services. He took a small stack of cookies from the Pentagon budget to show how little needs to be redistributed to meet basic human needs.

Even after the cold war, the United States is spending \$400 billion per year on the military. "We are having an arms race with ourselves," said Cohen. Whereas it takes \$2 billion a year to provide Head Start to all eligible children, \$6 billion a year to provide healthcare to all uninsured kids, and \$12 billion a year to rebuild American's schools over 10 years.

Cohen pulled out a pie chart showing federal spending. If we reduced the Pentagon budget by \$60 billion or 15 percent, we could adequately fund many domestic programs including housing, health and human services.

True Majority

An outgrowth of BLSP is TrueMajority.org, a free service that monitors Congress on social, environmental and international issues and offers its 330,000 members the opportunity to send free faxes to Congress and make their

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TANF Re-Authorization Update

BY LAUREN O'BRIEN

The July 2003 issue of *Housing Washington* included a discussion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policy and concerns raised by the proposed reauthorization legislation that is before Congress. Since then, the Senate Finance Committee approved Sen. Chuck Grassley's (R-IA) Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone bill (PRIDE) on September 10, 2003.

The Finance Committee approved a conceptual version of the PRIDE bill, meaning that the legislative language must still be worked out and some details clarified. The Senate will then debate the bill on the floor, where additional amendments may be made, and then pass a final version of the bill to be reconciled with the House version (HR4), eventually resulting in new federal TANF policy (through 2008). It is unclear when the Senate will actually debate TANF reauthorization on the floor, but Senate leadership comments suggest February 2004, which is almost a year and a half past the original deadline.

Senate vs. House Version

The Senate Finance bill contains some improvements over current law and is better in some respects than the House version, but PRIDE would also place harmful new restrictions on recipients as well as states. As with the House and Administration versions, the main issues are around Work Activity definitions and requirements and childcare funding levels.

Both the House and Senate Finance versions reduce the amount of time recipients can spend in education, training and other barrier-removal activities (like treatment). The PRIDE bill is somewhat better than HR4, allowing up to six months of training (combined with work after the first three months), compared to the House limit of three months within any 24-month period. These recommendations fly in the face of the data—recipients participating in programs that include basic education, job training and job search assistance are far more likely to transition successfully to employment above the poverty level. And often, these skill-building programs take more than the year currently allowed, and certainly, more than three to six months.

The Senate Finance bill does make a noticeable effort to pay attention to employment barriers, a change advocates have been calling for since the creation of TANF. In describing the assessment of recipients to be conducted, the Finance Committee adds in language specifically requiring an examination of barriers to employment. And, unlike the House bill, which

mandates full-family sanctions (i.e. elimination of cash benefits) for non-compliance, the PRIDE bill continues to allow partial sanctions and instead adds in the requirement that states must review a family's self-sufficiency plan to catch missed barriers prior to sanctioning them. The outcome of this sanction debate has the potential to significantly impact the rate of homelessness among TANF recipients.

Childcare Concerns

The Administration proposal, HR4 and PRIDE all mandate a big increase in participation rates (from 50 percent to 70 percent by 2008) and the number of "work activity" hours required per week. The Senate Finance version would basically require an additional four hours per week for families to be in compliance, whereas the House version restructures the compliance rules on top of increasing requirements, resulting in a system that would make it far harder for single parents (especially those with young children) to be in compliance than two-parent households. This increase in work requirements will greatly increase the need for childcare services. Yet, both the House and Senate Finance proposals include only \$1 billion in additional childcare funding over the next five years, which is not even enough to maintain the subsidy for the current number of children (about 430,000 children), let alone cover the increased demand as more families need childcare for more hours.

More Senate and House Comparisons

Some additional ways the Senate Finance recommendations differ from HR4 include:

- A more limited "super-waiver" proposal (the super-waiver may enable states to plug their budget holes with TANF funds);
- A change to the case-reduction credit so that states would get credit for families leaving the rolls for employment rather than simply no longer receiving assistance;
- Up to a 60-day grace period during which teen parents could receive assistance while they came into compliance with the school and supervised housing requirements.

And, some of the problematic aspects of the House bill incorporated into PRIDE include:

- No reauthorization bill yet would allow legal immigrants here fewer than five years to access benefits;
- Both HR4 and PRIDE set aside over \$1 billion in funding for "marriage promotion" activities.

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Washington Housing Alliance Sets 2004 Legislative Agenda

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance's (WLIHA) 2004 state legislative agenda covers the spectrum of housing issues, from supportive services for homeless families to increasing opportunities for home ownership for low-income families. Items on the agenda fall into either lead or support issues, depending upon whether the Housing Alliance will be leading the drafting of legislation and advocacy efforts, or supporting the lead of other organizations. The Housing Alliance also monitors legislation that may affect affordable housing. During the legislative session, the Housing Alliance publishes a weekly e-mail legislative alert, tracking progress on agenda issues.

Housing Trust Fund

The first lead issue on the agenda is maintaining the momentum to increase state housing resources. Even though social services funding was generally cut in all areas during the 2003 legislative session, the Housing Alliance successfully advocated for an increase in the state Housing Trust Fund from \$78 million to \$80 million. Even at \$80 million, however, the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development receives viable applications for more than twice the funds available. WLIHA calls upon the legislature to go further toward meeting these needs and in investing in jobs and economic development by increasing investment in the Housing Trust Fund to \$100 million per biennium.

Legislation

Other lead issues include establishing enforcement provisions for the Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act (Senate Bill 5068), ensuring fair and efficient distribution of House Bill 2060 operating funds for low-income housing, and providing relocation assistance to residential tenants who must vacate due to serious and repeated health and safety violations. Support issues include: protecting victims of domestic violence and stalking from discrimination in housing (HB 1645 / SB 5524); creating a homeless families services fund to provide sustaining operating dollars for 400 low-income housing units statewide for up to 15 years; expanding the property tax exemption for multifamily housing; and preserving housing and human services programs serving vulnerable persons.

Working with Legislators

Housing Alliance members developed the agenda at a series of workgroup and full membership meetings in October and November. All Housing Alliance members were invited to propose items for consideration. The agenda was arrived at after discussing all of the proposed issues, delegating some of the issues to workgroups for refinement, then reconvening and working to develop a consensus around each issue.

Between now and the beginning of the 2004 legislative session, WLIHA members will publicize the agenda to legislators, media, government agencies and the general public. WLIHA is also working to iden-

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Housing Alliance Welcomes New Executive Director

Shane Rock joined the newly merged Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA) as executive director in July this year. Previously, Shane led several social service organizations working on issues of poverty and homelessness. He was executive director of the Good Neighbor Mission in Tennessee, which provides shelter and counseling to homeless people. He led the Tennessee Network for Youth and Family Services, a statewide education and advocacy organization for youth in shelter programs. Shane also managed seven community development programs for the community action agency in Madison, Wisconsin.

After moving to Seattle in 1994, Shane became program director of The Sharehouse, a furniture bank for people

moving from shelters to permanent homes. Most recently, Shane was a systems engineer with RealImpact, a division of RealNetworks, Inc. There he worked with nonprofit organizations worldwide to use the Internet as a tool for electronic advocacy, fund development and media broadcasting.

He has served on the boards of the Tenants Union and Sand Point Community Housing Association, and is currently on the board of the Housing Resource Group. Shane is a 1984 graduate of Oberlin College with a B.A. in philosophy and government and holds a J.D. from Vanderbilt School of Law.



Shane Rock, executive director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Photo courtesy of WLIHA

For more information about the Alliance, contact Shane at shane@wlihn.org or (206) 442-9455.

Predatory Lending & Other Tough Issues Addressed at Housing Washington Conference

More than 600 people attended *Housing Washington* 2003—its 10th anniversary year—presented by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC) and the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development in partnership with the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance. The September 8-10 conference held in Spokane drew public officials, architects and planners, builders and developers, professional associations, non-profit housing and social service organizations.

Kicking off the conference, Minneapolis Mayor Raymond Thomas Rybak outlined the recommendations made to the Bush Administration by the U.S. Conference of Mayors for creating a *real* national housing policy. For more information on the mayors' recommendations, visit www.usmayors.org. Stacey Stewart, president and CEO of the Fannie Mae Foundation, was one of several nationally acclaimed speakers who offered keynote addresses. Stewart talked about the persistent and rapidly growing issue of predatory lending, its exploitation of homebuyers, and what it will take to stamp out this abuse.

Is homeownership a delusion or a true American dream? Anne Shlay, professor of sociology at Temple University, argued that, according to her research, low-income homeownership serves the interest of housing market institutions more than families and puts the burden of urban revitalization on poor people. Her comments were controversial and generated considerable discussion.

Other conference highlights included prominent "green guru" Steve Loken, president of Loken Builders of Missoula, Montana, who addressed what does and doesn't work for sustaining a clean environment and healthy ecosystems while building housing. Seattle-based Mithun's principal architect William Kreager spoke about the challenges to affordable housing developers presented by very small lot sizes in dense urban areas. Closing the conference, two Auburn University architecture professors, Andrew Freear and Bruce Lindsey, showcased how students of the Rural Studio in Alabama are crafting amazing new dwellings using cast-off goods, such as car windshields and tires, for very low-income families living in dilapidated homes.

In all, more than 60 experts from across the state

and country presented a full agenda of topics. Some of the conference information is available at www.wshfc.org/conf.

2003 Friend of Housing Awards

The WSHFC presented its 2003 Friend of Housing awards at the conference, honoring those who have exceeded their normal work duties to provide affordable housing to Washington state residents with low- to moderate-incomes or special needs. The 2003 recipients include:

■ Tonkin, Hoyne, Lokan Architects

Les Tonkin, Barry Hoyne and Kim Lokan have a long history of working with nonprofit organizations, housing authorities and developers across the state. They have completed over 30 affordable, high-quality and well-designed projects.

■ Mario Villanueva

Director of the Diocese of Yakima Housing Services for the past three years, Mario has dedicated 14 years to working as a housing planner, program manager and development coordinator.

■ Kay Cram

Kay is board president of the Spokane Homeownership Resource Center (SHORC) and a loan originator for Action Mortgage in Spokane. As a volunteer, she instructed more than 30 first-time homebuyer seminars, helping homebuyers who never thought they'd own their own home overcome obstacles when other lenders would have given up.

■ Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington

This year the OIC worked vigorously to save the Leon Sullivan Health Care Center, a skilled nursing facility in Seattle's Central Area. The award was presented to OIC Executive Director Henry Beauchamp.

■ Susan Duren

As vice president of the Washington Community Reinvestment Association, Susan is one of the most experienced and successful community development and affordable housing lenders in the state. She has originated over \$160 million dollars in loans to build more than 6,500 affordable housing units in Washington.

■ Judy Dailey

Now-retired vice president and community investment officer with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle, Judy directed the bank's Community Lending Programs throughout the 1990s and launched a number of the bank's affordable housing programs. She made a number of FHA programs work for the

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Mario Villanueva, director of the Diocese of Yakima Housing Services, with Kim Herman, WSHFC executive director. Photo courtesy of WSHFC.

Tacoma Appeals Court Rules in Favor of Low-Income Housing

Puget Sound-area low-income housing advocates and clients enjoyed a legal victory in early September.

Three low-income residents and two nonprofit housing organizations challenged aspects of the City of Lakewood's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which re-designated two low-income residential neighborhoods for industrial purposes while failing to demonstrate how the City would meet its well-documented and extreme need for affordable housing.

On September 9, the Tacoma Court of Appeals issued a published opinion in *Low Income Housing Institute v. City of Lakewood*, reversing a decision of the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board that upheld the City's Plan against those challenges.

As noted in the appellate opinion, the City's own Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) concluded that under the Plan the supply of affordable housing could be expected to decrease, and Pierce County, the Washington Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development, and Lakewood's own consultants objected to the industrial designation of the two neighborhoods because of the loss of affordable housing.

Nonetheless, the Board had upheld the City's Plan on all of these issues. A Thurston County Superior Court judge reversed the Board on some issues, regarding the Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements to ensure the vitality of existing residential neighborhoods, but ruled for the City on whether the Plan was consistent with the GMA's affordable housing goals, and whether it complied with Pierce County's own Plan requirement that cities both assess and meet their share of affordable housing needs.

In its reversal of that decision, the Court of Appeals concluded that the Board had failed to decide the housing goal issue. The Court also held that the Board erred as a matter of law when it evaluated Lakewood's consistency with Pierce County's standards by only reviewing whether the City had adequately identified its affordable housing needs without also evaluating whether the City had complied with the County's requirement that it also actually meet the need for such housing.

"This case is important because for the first time the Court has required the Board to closely analyze a City's comprehensive plan for whether it will actually meet the demand for affordable housing" said John Purbaugh of the Northwest Justice Project in Tacoma, who represented the low-income residents. "The Court squarely rejected the argument that a city must merely assess that need but is not required by the GMA to demonstrate how it will be met" he added.

Michael Mirra, a volunteer lawyer and former Columbia Legal Services (CLS) attorney also working on the case, added: "The case has shown the GMA to be a useful source of authority in support of planning decisions and strategies to preserve and develop affordable housing."

The case was remanded to the Board for further proceedings. The Board will hear the case on April 5, 2004 and is expected to decide the case by mid-May 2004.

"We are encouraged that the Court of Appeals' decision requires the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Board to take a second look at these important issues," said Dixie Shaw, program manager of the Fair Housing Center of South Puget Sound, one of the nonprofit housing organizations that challenged the Plan.

In addition to Purbaugh and Mirra, CLS attorney Steve Robins represented the organizational plaintiffs.

For more information, contact John Purbaugh at Northwest Justice Project at (253) 272-7879 ext. 13 or JohnP@nujustice.org.

The *Housing Washington* newsletter is published quarterly by the Low Income Housing Institute. The newsletter is available to individuals and organizations concerned with increasing the supply of affordable, low-income housing for residents of Washington state.

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Rural Housing Successes in Washington State Despite Limitations

BY BRIEN THANE

There is a shortage of decent, safe and affordable housing throughout our country, and all areas face enormous hurdles in trying to address this crisis. Rural communities face a number of special limitations, and the need for affordable housing

is not as visible as it is in many urban areas. Despite these limitations, there are many affordable housing successes in rural Washington, thanks in large part to our state's broad-based commitment to address local needs in all parts of the state.

Median incomes in many of Washington's rural counties are only 58 to 68 percent of incomes in major urban areas. This significantly limits affordable housing investments and the ability to leverage

financing. Many Low Income Housing Tax Credit syndicators shy away from investing in these lower-income and small-scale rural developments. These same factors (income and scale) have long been unattractive to developers of all types of housing, despite significant population growth in many rural areas.

The lack of affordable housing is not as visible in rural areas. Folks who would otherwise be considered homeless instead overcrowd in friends' and relatives' homes or sleep in a camper or garage. Limited new construction also results in a large proportion of aging housing stock that needs rehabilitation.

Across the nation farm workers disproportionately suffer substandard, unaffordable housing conditions. Yet, the first published systematic national study of farm worker housing conditions found that farm workers in the Pacific Northwest suffer the highest combinations of substandard, overcrowded and

unaffordable (cost-burdened) housing: *No Refuge from the Fields: Findings from a Survey of Farm Worker Housing Conditions in the United States*, Housing Assistance Council, September 2001.

Many rural communities are also at or reaching the limits of their infrastructure. Growth is stressing water and sewer capacities, and older systems struggle to comply with new requirements. The costs of on-site septic systems and small, community water systems are often unaffordable for modest homes.

By recognizing these limitations and problems, Washington has successfully targeted many more affordable housing resources to rural and farm worker developments than most other states. The original state Housing Trust Fund legislation set a goal of 30 percent of funds for rural housing. The Community Development Block Grant Small Cities Program has targeted financing to support rural housing development. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission offers Low Income Housing Tax Credit points



Heritage Glen, owned and managed by the Housing Authority of Chelan County/City of Wenatchee, is unique in that it has 18 units of seasonal housing and 17 units of year-round housing. The housing serves farm workers and their families at 50 percent of area median income. Heritage Glen has become a welcome addition to the East Wenatchee community, which has a shortage of units for migrating workers. Photo courtesy of ORFH.



Raspberry Ridge Apartments in Burlington is owned and managed by the Housing Authority of Skagit County. Raspberry Ridge is a mixture of one- and two-story buildings. There are 50 units of housing focusing on extremely low-income farm worker families at 35 percent of median income. Photo courtesy of ORFH.

for farm worker housing and works to allocate credits to rural communities. Our state has also committed to appropriating \$40 million over 10 years to farm worker housing.

Nationally, funding for rural housing programs has been relatively limited for many years, and federal appropriations have declined severely over the past decade. The USDA Rural Housing Service's Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program, which used to generate several new housing developments a year in our state, hit a new low in fiscal year 2003. Only 826 new housing units were financed nationally under this program while 1,845 homes with project-based subsidies were lost through mortgage prepayments. Budget writers also continue to push for more guaranteed rural home ownership loans at the expense of direct, subsidized federal loans and self-help housing that are accessible to households with much lower incomes.

While we can and must do much more to address the housing needs for our rural and farm worker neighbors, we have many successes that we can build

upon and replicate. Our challenge is to expand our efforts in the face of economic and budgetary pressures.

Brien Thane is the executive director of the statewide, nonprofit Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing. ORFH has developed affordable rural and farm worker housing in partnership with local nonprofits and housing authorities since 1978. For more information, contact ORFH at (509) 248-7014 or brient@orfh.org.



Wahluke Village, owned and operated by the Housing Authority of Grant County, sits on a hill overlooking hundreds of acres of orchards and vineyards in Mattawa. Two play structures, barbeque areas with green space and benches, a basketball court, security lighting and a community building are amenities that make Wahluke Village an attractive place to live. Wahluke serves farm workers and their families at 40 percent of area median income. Photo courtesy of ORFH.

ESIC Forum

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voices heard. Individuals, for-profits and nonprofit groups can also be involved in this organization. TrueMajority is a grassroots education and advocacy project of Priorities, Inc., a nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-deductible 501(c)3 corporation. Having sold Ben & Jerry's in 2000, Cohen devotes his time to BLSP and TrueMajority, and is also chair of two venture capital funds.

TrueMajority aims to reduce world poverty and hunger, promote renewable energy, and close the gap between the rich and poor in the United States. The organization states that it is "time to bring America's policies into harmony with our deepest ideals: compassion, sustainability and justice."

ESIC Workshops

The ESIC Forum included workshops on Section 8 housing preservation, New Markets Tax Credits, model communities, structuring successful deals, and accounting issues for affordable housing.

The conference also provided participants an opportunity to meet Donahue, who became ESIC's president and CEO in early 2003. Prior to working for ESIC, Donahue served on the ESIC Board for seven

years and worked for The Rouse Company for 30 years as executive vice president and chief financial officer.

ESIC is a subsidiary of The Enterprise Foundation and has financed housing through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program in urban, suburban and rural markets. The organization serves a diverse population, and in 2003, completed its one thousandth housing investment. Every year, ESIC and its subsidiaries invest in or directly develop approximately \$750 million of affordable housing and related community facilities. ESIC was also awarded \$90 million in New Markets Tax Credits in 2003 to help finance commercial development in underserved and emerging markets.

2004 Forum

ESIC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2004. The ESIC Forum in 2004 will be held at the Marriott Marquis in New York City from October 12-13. This precedes The Enterprise Foundation conference scheduled for Oct. 13-15.

Sharon Lee is executive director of the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information about ESIC, check their website at www.esic.org. For information about Ben Cohen, visit www.TrueMajority.org.

State Housing Services Division Director Describes Priorities & Goals

Stephen Buxbaun is the new assistant director of the Housing Services Division in the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED). The Housing Services Division programs include support for low-income housing, farm worker housing and services for homeless people. He recently responded to the following questions posed to him by *Housing Washington*.

Q: What is your background in low-income housing and homelessness issues?

A: I have over twenty years of experience with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program—and have met and worked with many of the state’s housing stakeholders in this capacity. It has been through the CDBG program that I have been able to participate with local governments and non-profit organizations on infrastructure for housing, farm worker housing, special need housing and housing rehabilitation. In the past five years, I have also been responsible for the Bond Cap program, which has given me an opportunity to broaden my understanding of finance mechanisms for housing. I also served on the Housing Trust Fund’s Funding Approval Board for three years.

Most of my 25 plus years of professional life have been spent directly leveraging public and private resources to assist those that are most in need. I have had several successful experiences in developing fair and transparent funding processes. From my past experience I am committed to collaborative problem solving and keeping in mind the broader policy and community context that projects work in.

Q: What are your priorities for the department and also for the Housing Trust Fund?

A: I am, and have always been, very enthusiastic about CTED’s mix of programs. The agency tends to attract an extraordinary mix of people who care deeply about community and economic development and want to do the best they can to both be good stewards and proactively meet the needs of our clients. Overall, I am interested in making certain that we do the best we can to leverage the investments that CTED programs are making and collectively work smarter about how to make those investments. I am hopeful that we can work smarter by increasing our use of automated information systems – both in the handling

of our information internally and through web applications.

As for the Housing Trust Fund, I am excited about working very closely with stakeholders on making application processes work as smoothly and easily as possible. I also want to give attention to the 15 years of investments that make up our HTF portfolio. These projects represent long-term commitments and relationships that need to be protected and cared for. Again, there will be opportunities for us to work smarter, both through the appropriate use of technology and improvements to our internal business practices.

Q: What challenges do you feel the office faces?

A: I am encouraged by the Affordable Housing Advisory Board’s focus on three priorities for the next year:

- Supportive housing – examining ways we can more effectively integrate capital housing resources with supportive services for special need populations.

- Growth Management and affordable housing – looking for ways to better facilitate efforts to expand the supply of affordable housing, including the review and evaluation of mechanisms for assisting local governments to meet their GMA housing goals.

- Insurance costs and affordable housing development – looking for ways to address the barriers associated with affordable housing development resulting from rising insurance costs.

Q: What are your goals and how do you see yourself working to increase housing and resources to low-income and homeless people in the state?

A: Support my staff, be open and available to stakeholders and clients, and keep an open mind so that I can learn from the incredibly knowledgeable people that make up our housing community. Washington state is truly blessed with what I believe to be an un-comparable network of service providers, housing authorities and advocacy groups—and our lenders and developers are some of the most progressive. I am grateful to be part of the family as a full-fledged houser.

Stephen Buxbaum may be contacted at (360) 725-2912 or stephenb@cted.wa.gov.

The 2003 Homeless Count in Seattle Reveals Dramatic Increase Outside Downtown

More than 300 volunteers ventured into wind and rain in the wee hours on October 17 counting homeless people in Seattle, Kent and Shoreline. The effort was part of the annual street count sponsored by the Seattle/King County Coalition of the Homeless (SKCCH) and Operation Nightwatch.

This year a total of 1,899 people were counted. "People are sheltering close to buildings—many had no blankets. It is a sobering experience," said Dan Brettler, CEO of Car Toys and vice chair of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County.

The annual count extended to Ballard three years ago, and this year, for the first time, included the suburban city of Shoreline. The count in Ballard was the highest yet, at 253 people (109 were counted last year). One homeless Ballard resident was seen sleeping in a dumpster, and many were seen residing in vehicles.

The total number of people counted this year was down slightly from last year when comparing similar count areas. Dan Wise, co-chair of SKCCH, says the decrease can be attributable to the heavy rain that night and also to people moving out of the downtown area. The increased numbers in Ballard seem to confirm what homeless advocates and service providers

are hearing from clients. "People are moving out of the downtown core to the suburban neighborhoods where they are less likely to encounter the police or be victimized," Wise said.



Michael Mackey, Brittny Eidsvoog and Lisa Pierce weathered the rain and wind to volunteer for the One Night Count. Photo courtesy of SKCCH.

Washington ranks seventh in the nation for the incidence of crimes against people living on the streets. Attempts to find a safe haven from predators can be frustrating. A number of count teams noted that wooded areas that held many tents last year were now bulldozed with city signs stating "vacate" and "no authorized camping."

Regardless of the slightly decreased numbers this year,

Tara Connor, the other SKCCH co-chair, points out that the number is still much too high. "No level of homelessness in our community is acceptable," she said.

Along with the street count, the One Night Count also includes a survey of shelters and transitional programs in King County. Those numbers are still being tabulated and a final report will be released. The count provides the most comprehensive survey available of homelessness in King County.

For more information, contact Tara Connor at (206) 374-9409, ext. 119 or tconnor@plymouthhousing.org, or Dan Wise at (206) 228-4065.

TANF Update

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Contact Your Senators

The Senate Finance Committee's version of the PRIDE bill could still look very different if senators propose and generate support for amendments that address the real needs of low-income and homeless families. Before the Senate casts its final vote, contact your senators and urge them to support and/or introduce the amendments necessary to make the PRIDE bill into legislation that will actually enable families to move out of poverty, and that gives states the flexibility they need to help them do so.

Beyond the issue of reauthorization legislation is the issue of TANF policy implementation. The real effect of TANF reauthorization will be played out in local welfare offices across the country.

Efforts to educate those carrying out TANF policy about the needs and situation of TANF recipients (in

addition to those making the policy) are essential, for even if the legislation were to allow unlimited access to training and barrier-removal activities, it will mean nothing if recipients do not know about their rights to these services, or are unable to access them.

Contact our Washington state Senators:

Maria Cantwell: <http://cantwell.senate.gov>

Patty Murray: <http://murray.senate.gov>

For more information:

Center on Budget and Public Policy – www.cbpp.org

Center on Law and Social Policy – www.clasp.org

Coalition on Human Needs – www.chn.org

Lauren O'Brien is a graduate student at the University of Washington and until October was a life skills coordinator with Seattle Emergency Housing Service.

Washington ranks seventh in the nation for the incidence of crimes against people living on the streets.

Tyree Scott Apartments Named After Human Rights Activist

The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) is pleased to dedicate its newest affordable housing in honor of Tyree Scott, who passed away in June of this year. The Tyree Scott Apartments will provide 21 units of family-friendly townhouses and apartment flats in Seattle's Rainier Valley at 4000 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South.

"We are thrilled to dedicate our new housing to Tyree Scott, a compassionate champion of human rights. Affordable housing for working families is difficult to find in Seattle as many families have had to leave the city. The architect and contractor have done an exceed-

ingly good job in designing and building attractive, high-quality housing that will be a showcase in southeast Seattle," said Sharon Lee, LIHI executive director.

Low-income and working families with incomes up to 50 percent of median income will benefit from the housing (\$38,950 annually for a family of four). Units range from studios to generously sized four-bedroom units. Six units will provide much needed transitional housing for homeless families. Six units are set aside for households with a family member with a development disability. The housing will be operated as mutual housing to involve residents in the management of the housing. Units are currently available for lease.

Housing Design

The design includes four buildings with townhouse units over flats. The upper units have attractive and inviting decks, bay windows and

lots of light. There are two courtyards and an office. The architect is Pyatok Architects and the contractor is Walsh Construction. The construction contract was \$2.1 million.

The new Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) headquarters are located next to the apartments and were developed with LIHI's assistance. A new KaBOOM! playground was built in one day with volunteer help earlier in the year. Residents will benefit from ReWA programs, meeting space, day care, ESL classes, a computer lab and other services located next door.

Open House

The Open House celebration was on December 18. Speakers included: Beverly Sims, Tyree's widow and long-term LIHI board member; Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels; Bob Santos; Jaime Garcia; state DCTED Director Martha Choe; Paul Cummings and Larry Gossett. A tour of the housing was provided.

Community Hero

Tyree is a well-loved hero and champion of human rights and economic justice. He was a founder and board chair of the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO), a 28-year-old workers' rights organization. Tyree's long organizing history includes forcing the racial integration of Seattle's building and construction industry in the 1970s. He was a founder of the United Construction Workers Association, which fought discrimination and shut



*The late Tyree Scott with his daughter, Eula.
Photo courtesy of Duncan Haas.*



The new Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) building is located adjacent to the Tyree Scott Apartments. Photo courtesy of Duncan Haas.



The new Tyree Scott apartments includes 21 units of mutual housing.

Funding grants and in-kind support for the KaBOOM! Playground were provided by: KaBOOM!, Home Depot, KeyBank, Seahawks, Shaun Alexander Family Foundation, ReWA, Weyerhaeuser and the Harrington-Schiff Foundation.

down construction job sites at Seattle Central Community College, University of Washington, Sea-Tac Airport and other locations.

Having spent years working on the docks, Tyree spearheaded the creation of LELO's International Worker-to-Worker Project in 1997, an ongoing effort to build a communication and action network among ordinary rank-and-file workers around the world. Tyree organized a worker-to-worker relief drive that delivered clothes, medical equipment and a brick-making machine to the people of Mozambique. In December 1999, he retired from his job as a union electrician at the Port of Seattle.

Financing

Major funding for the Tyree Scott Apartments include: Seattle Housing Levy; Federal Home Loan Bank; State Housing Trust Fund; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-Sound Families Program; Enterprise Social Investment Corporation; Fannie Mae; Sterling Bank; Impact Capital; Seattle Housing Authority; and Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

For information about Tyree Scott Apartments contact Cindy Proctor, LIHI development manager at (206) 443-9935 or cindyp@lihi.org.



Over 100 community volunteers constructed a new KaBOOM! playground to benefit children from both the Tyree Scott Apartments and ReWA. Photo courtesy of Duncan Haas.

2004 Legislative Agenda

continued from page 3

tify a key contact in each legislative district who will be responsible for coordinating advocacy contacts between WLIHA members and legislators in their district. Once the session begins in early January, WLIHA's lobbyist, Nick Federici, will actively work on the agenda in Olympia with support of WLIHA members. The Housing Alliance has a State Legislative Committee to continually reassess legislative positions before and during the session. There is also a Session Committee that holds weekly conference calls to monitor progress on the Housing Alliance Agenda.

Housing Advocacy Day

The biggest grassroots push will occur at the annual Housing Advocacy Day scheduled for January 29, 2004 in Olympia. It will feature advocacy training with Nancy Amidei, meetings with state legislators, and camaraderie with housing advocates throughout Washington state. Everyone involved with affordable housing in the state should plan to attend.

For more information about Housing Advocacy Day or the Housing Alliance legislative agenda, or to inquire about becoming a key contact for your legislative district, please contact the WLIHA office at (206) 442-9455 or mail@wlihn.org.

Labor/HomeStreet Bank Program Helps Local Working Families Buy Homes

Since 1998, organized labor in King County has been demonstrating what working people can achieve when they put their pension assets to work to promote their long-term economic interests in affordable housing.

Over \$92 million in pension funds has been invested in King County for affordable homeownership loans through a partnership with the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, the Worker Center, HomeStreet Bank, Fannie Mae and local employers. Over 555 union families have become homeowners with a total savings in closing costs of \$686,000 through the Labor/HomeStreet Bank program. The savings are achieved through discounted fees available to union members who participate in the program.

Housing and its high costs continue to be a huge issue for working families in our area. The dream of owning one's home is becoming less and less attainable for more and more working families. Keeping up with housing costs through collective bargaining is difficult in an environment shaped by a down economy and rising healthcare costs.

"Our goal is to help people achieve their dream of homeownership—even in this high-cost market," said Dianne Wasson, affinity lending manager of HomeStreet Bank. "We accomplish this because we

help our borrowers prepare for homeownership through education, budget planning and finding the right programs for them."



Aloria Mercer is the affordable housing labor liaison at the Worker Center, AFL-CIO, a division of the King County Labor Council. Photo courtesy of Local OPEIU8.

The Worker Center, a division of the King County Labor Council, recognized and responded to the needs of union members by creating a liaison position to keep workers apprised of what is developing in the housing community. Aloria Mercer, labor's affordable housing labor liaison, has mainly focused on providing information on home purchasing options for union members. As a former union officer with the Communications Workers of America, Mercer knows her way around the labor community. She is getting the word out about home ownership opportunities through union membership and executive board meetings, newsletters and conferences.

"The great thing about working within labor is that by contacting one union, I can provide information to hundreds of workers at dozens of workplaces about affordable housing issues," said Mercer.

As an expansion of her work, she also is working to provide assistance for union members who are not quite ready to purchase but are looking for affordable rental housing.

For more information, contact Aloria Mercer at the Worker Center, AFL-CIO, a division of the King County Labor Council, at (206) 441-307, ext. 20 or amercer@wc-kclc.org.

Housing Washington Conference

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Seattle bank, led programs to support housing on Native lands, and pushed for regulations to make programs more effective, flexible and economical.

■ State Rep. Hans Dunshee

As former chair of the House Local Government Committee and now as the presiding chair of the House Capital Budget Committee, Rep. Dunshee makes sure that the Housing Trust Fund is a top pri-

ority during every capital budget discussion.

■ State Senator Joseph Zarelli

Sen. Zarelli is chair of the Ways and Means Capital Budget Subcommittee and very supportive of the Housing Trust Fund. He and Rep. Dunshee together expanded the Fund.

For more information on the Housing Washington 2003 Conference, visit www.wshfc.org/conf.

State Housing Finance Agencies from Across Country Meet in Seattle

BY CYNTHIA ADCOCK

Representatives from every state housing finance agency (HFA) across the country were in Seattle for the National Council of State Housing Agencies' (NCSHA) 33rd Annual Meeting on October 25-28. Kim Herman, executive director of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, along with Barbara Thompson, executive director of the NCSHA, both said they were thrilled with the turnout of almost 1,000 people.

Herman, an NCSHA Board member, who was elected treasurer of the NCSHA at the meeting, said: "We were especially glad to host this conference during our 20th anniversary because it gives us a chance to show the national housing community what we have achieved in Washington. Our state is a national leader in affordable housing, and I am very proud to be part of our successful efforts."

In her executive director's address, Thompson urged all attendees to continue the incredible work they do in their home states and in Washington to create and administer programs that provide affordable housing for those who need it most.

Legislative Agenda

Thompson said that although the state HFAs are doing great work, there is more that could be done, and should be done. If NCSHA's legislative agenda is successful, thousands more families across the country will have access to affordable housing. "It is the work of all 50 of the states, speaking with one voice, that makes a difference in the legislative battles we continue to fight in Washington, D.C. Having a great crowd like this rallies the battle cry for our current legislative priorities, including repeal of the Mortgage Revenue (MRB) Bond Ten-Year Rule, reform of the MRB purchase price limit, and improved use of the bonds and the credit in rural areas."

Conference Highlights

Highlights of the conference included more than 40 workshops and roundtables on every aspect of affordable housing. Many of the sessions dealt with issues around the three federally-authorized programs that are the center of HFA activity within the states: the Mortgage Revenue Bond, the Housing Credit and the HOME Investment Partnerships program. Other sessions were offered in the communications, special housing needs, governance and human resources area.

A keynote address by world-renowned anthropologist and Seattle resident Jennifer James focused

on "Thinking in the Future Tense." As always, one of the most exciting occurrences of the conference was the much-anticipated Annual Awards presentations.

Annual Awards

The awards feature outstanding work done by HFAs in homeownership, communications, rental housing, special needs and management innovation. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission won the award for best annual report in the communications category, as well as the human resources award in the management innovations category.

Housing Homeless People

The conference closed with an exciting plenary session entitled *Homelessness in America: HFAs Making an Impact*. The session, moderated by Nan Roman, president of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, explored the state role in housing the homeless. Featured speakers for the session were Steve Thomas, chief operating officer for the Corporation for Supportive Housing; Paul Carlson, regional coordinator with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness; Richard Harris, executive director of Central City Concern, a nonprofit supportive housing provider in Portland, Oregon; Edwina P. Carrington, executive director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs; and Richard H. Godfrey Jr., executive director of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation.

According to Thompson, conferences like the one just held in Seattle keep NCSHA at the forefront of the national affordable housing scene. Herman agreed: "This conference was crucial because through NCSHA we bring our affiliate members together with the leaders and staff of the state HFAs—giving affordable housing a voice in Washington and the nation."

NCSHA is a national, nonprofit organization created by the nation's state HFAs to assist them in increasing housing opportunities for lower income and underserved people through the financing, development and preservation of affordable housing.

Cynthia Adcock is with the NCSHA. For more information, contact the Washington State Housing Finance Commission at www.wshfc.org or (206) 464-7139, or visit the NCSHA website at www.ncsha.org.

Conference Calls for an End to the “Revolving Door” of Homelessness

BY BILL KIRLIN-HACKETT

“What is it that we can rally around so that homelessness in King County looks radically different than it does today?”

Dean Robert Taylor of St. Mark’s Cathedral and leader of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County posed this question to the 250 people representing the faith community, government, business and nonprofit advocates for the homeless who gathered together at the third annual *Creating the Political Will to End Homelessness* conference.



David Bloom, director of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness, speaks to attendees at the third annual “Creating the Political Will to End Homelessness” conference. Photo courtesy of ITFH.

“It is this,” Taylor suggested. “Homelessness is unacceptable and is something we will not tolerate.”

Attendance exceeded expectations at the November 12 conference, held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral in Seattle. Participants heard some of the area’s leading providers, thinkers and advocates on homeless issues bring perspective on what the U.S. Conference of Mayors called the number one crisis in America’s cities.

Keynote speaker, the Rev. Killian Noe, co-founder of Samaritan Inns in Washington, D.C. and developer of a Seattle worshipping community and a soon-to-open Seattle recovery ministry called Recovery Café, reported that she experienced gains in combating homelessness by using a dual approach. She reminded those gathered that a compassionate structure, or the deliverance of basic charity, while a necessary partner in solutions to end homelessness, is not enough.

Quoting author Janet Poppendieck’s book *Sweet Charity*, Noe said “a culture of charity normalizes destitution.” Compassionate structures in the form of acts of charity must be partnered with confrontation of unjust systems. Our public sector has become a system where safety nets have disappeared, and as Noe

says, “where whole populations at risk are left out.”

At two of the morning sessions, panelists addressed this year’s conference focus: the issue of the “Revolving Door.” The Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness (ITFH) describes the Revolving Door dilemma as one where social service systems, agencies and faith communities, through a lack of resources and of a coordinated plan, end up contributing to the downward spiral of chronically homeless people. The chronically homeless are those who have experienced homelessness for longer than a month and who are not easily restored to a stable living situation. These are most often people suffering from debilitating chemical addictions and/or mental illness.

“These are the people who continue to cycle in and out of services—at an enormous cost to the community,” said the Rev. David Bloom, ITFH director. According to Bloom, it is no mystery to homeless advocates and service providers how best to help this population. They need sustained treatment and long-term supportive housing. What’s missing, he says, is the political will to make the commitment of resources necessary to provide that.

Participants in the conference divided into working groups in the afternoon to more closely examine specific problems and to outline approaches that will become the core of the ITFH’s work plan for 2004. Conference participants identified a variety of solutions, including helping homeless people “to build community,” closer partnerships among service providers, and stronger political advocacy to redirect priorities and alleviate funding shortages, especially at the national level.

Bloom also pointed out that their work includes awakening the “home-blest” in their differing levels of abundance, “who can not only open doors but who can stop the revolving doors from contributing to the chaos.” One panelist suggested that the most radical act of all will be to “elect political leaders who are not afraid to promise taxes to end homelessness.” Perhaps even more radical, however, will be for more and more of us to say aloud, “Homelessness is unacceptable and is something we will not tolerate.”

Bill Kirlin-Hackett is a member of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Bellevue and of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness. For more information contact the Rev. David Bloom at ecurev@sprynet.com or (206) 941-8068.

LIHI Receives MacArthur Foundation Grant

The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) was recently awarded a \$100,000 grant from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of the Foundation's new national initiative, *Window of Opportunity: Preserving Affordable Rental Housing*. Three other leading regional nonprofit housing organizations based in Arizona, Georgia and Texas received similar grants. Each of the four grant recipients is undertaking or preparing to launch a major preservation effort.

"The Foundation's grant to LIHI will help us in our effort to preserve over 800 affordable rental units in the next few years," said Sharon Lee, LIHI executive director. "There are thousands of families and seniors with modest incomes living in expiring Section 8 and tax credit housing in Washington state. Unless their housing is preserved, these residents would easily be at risk of homelessness."

"There has been so much attention placed on homeownership. It is refreshing to see a major foundation focus on the need to preserve affordable rental housing," remarked Tim Abell, LIHI Board president.

LIHI is a recognized leader in preserving threatened Section 8 and other at-risk housing. LIHI was successful in preserving the 234-unit Frye Hotel in Seattle's Pioneer Square neighborhood, which provides affordable Section 8 rental housing to seniors, families and disabled people, and the award-winning Julie Apartments, which provides 47 units of affordable downtown housing.

Most recently, two at-risk Section 8 projects with 74 units in Snohomish County were saved and rehabilitated for existing low-income families and seniors: Brentwood Apartments in Mountlake Terrace and Cedarwood II Apartments in Lake Stevens. Financing was obtained from Snohomish County, State Housing Trust Fund, KeyBank, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Washington Community Reinvestment Association, Federal Home Loan Bank, Freddie Mac, Sterling Bank and the Enterprise Social Investment Corporation.

"Rental housing of all types is an essential component of a balanced national housing supply. Virtually all of us, at one time or another, have relied on rental housing, and for millions of people, affordable rental housing is a necessity," said Jonathan F. Fanton, president of the MacArthur Foundation. "Through this initiative, the Foundation expects to directly support the preservation of 100,000 existing affordable

rental units in urban, suburban and rural markets; encourage additional preservation investments by public and private sector sources; and stimulate public policies that give a new generation of owners the motivation and means to preserve at least one million affordable rental units in the decade ahead."

The MacArthur Foundation developed the initiative because the existing supply of affordable rental housing is under growing pressure at a time when the need for such housing has never been greater. Approximately 35 million households live in rental housing today—one third of all U.S. households—and all but five million have incomes of \$60,000 or less. An estimated 12 million unsubsidized renter households spend more than 35 percent of their income for rent, exceeding the 30 percent level typically considered affordable—an increase of one million over the past decade.

Since 1997, nearly 200,000 privately owned, government-subsidized rental units were lost as owners opted out of expired contracts, causing the stock of such units—the country's most affordable apartments—to drop by ten percent. And by the third quarter of 2002, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the median rent for a newly constructed rental apartment reached \$928 per month, nearly two-and-a-half times the maximum amount that is affordable to the ten million lowest income renters.

"Ongoing additions to the affordable stock are important but modest in comparison to the overall need," said Debra Schwartz, director of Program-Related Investments for the Foundation. "If losses of existing affordable units are left unchecked, we will be running harder than ever just to stay in place."

For information about the MacArthur Foundation see their web site at www.macfound.org.



Ed Gramlich of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve (at left), with Sharon Lee, LIHI executive director, and Anthony Fanton, president of the MacArthur Foundation.

Housing is “Out of Reach” for Many in Washington

BY MEGAN FARLEY

A person in Washington State has to earn \$15.15 per hour—more than twice the minimum wage—to be able to afford to rent a modest two-bedroom home, according to the 2003 “Out of Reach” report. This amount, known as the housing wage, is the amount a person working full-time has to earn to afford the fair market rent on a two-bedroom unit while paying no more than 30 percent of income in rent.

The annual report, prepared by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, documents the cost of housing in every state, metropolitan area and county.

“The housing situation for people with low incomes in Washington State is even worse than it was last year. People just don’t earn enough to be able to afford even modest rental housing,” said Shane Rock, executive director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. “It is unacceptable that people who work here full time still cannot afford a decent place to live.”

Out of Reach 2003 finds that:

- Minimum wage workers in Washington State must work 86 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom unit. There is no jurisdiction in Washington in which a person earning the minimum wage can afford the fair market rent for even a one-bedroom unit.

- The national housing wage increased by 3.74 percent between 2002 and 2003 while the inflation rate increased only 2.1 percent.

- The nationally weighted Housing Wage for 2003 is \$15.21 an hour, meaning that on average across the country, a person working full time has to earn nearly three times the federal minimum wage to be able to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

At the state level, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and other advocates are calling for an increase to the State’s Housing Trust Fund. “Washington’s Housing Trust Fund has been able to offset some of overwhelming rent burden—but we need to do more,” says Rock. “When 370,000 Washington renters can’t afford a modest two-bedroom apartment, we have a serious problem.”

At the national level, advocates are urging full funding for all federal housing programs—specifically the Housing Choice Voucher program, which faces funding threats—and the establishment of a National Housing Trust Fund, which would provide communities with funds to build, rehabilitate and preserve 1.5 million units of housing over the next 10 years.

For each jurisdiction, the report calculates the amount of money a person working a 40-hour week for all 52 weeks of the year must earn to afford a rental

unit of a range of sizes at the area’s Fair Market Rent (FMR), based on the generally accepted affordability standard of paying no more than 30 percent of income for housing costs. The FMR is HUD’s best estimate of what a person seeking housing would have to pay for a modest rental unit in the local market.

The complete 2003 Out of Reach report is available at www.nlihc.org.

Megan Farley works with the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, www.wlihn.org. She can be reached at megan@wlihn.org or (206) 442-9455.

Troubling Trends: Housing Costs Exceed Minimum Wage

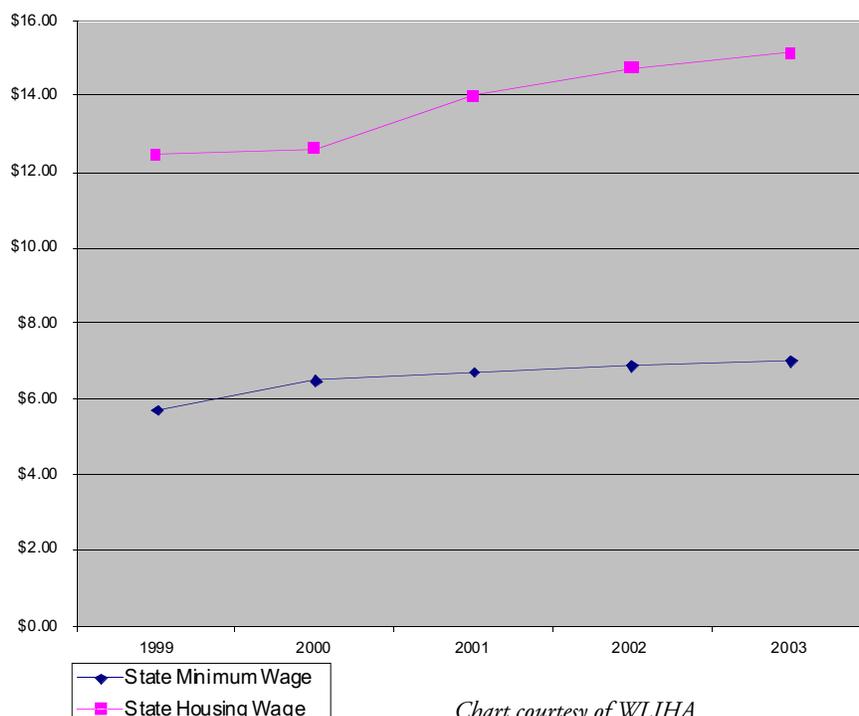


Chart courtesy of WLIHA

New Funding Source for Affordable Housing for Developmentally Disabled

BY BETH BORAM

On November 13, the King County Housing and Community Development Program (KCHCD) and the King County Developmental Disabilities Division (KCDDD) hosted a focus group to hear feedback from affordable housing developers on the newly created Housing Innovations for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (HIPDD) fund. This is a resource for developers to create new types of affordable housing for persons with developmental disabilities (DD) in Seattle and King County. \$1.2 million in initial funding is provided for the program, and KCDDD has partnered with KCHCD to design the program guidelines and award funding for projects.

In 1970, nearly half of all persons enrolled to receive services through the State DSHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) lived in state institutions; today three percent of all persons enrolled to receive services live in institutions. This change marks a huge step forward in opportunities available to persons with DD. Today, virtually all 4,527 adults with DD enrolled to receive services in King County live in the community with the opportunity to make choices about their lives.

This change has also created a major need for affordable and accessible housing for people with DD. In King County significant progress has been made over the past 10 years through the development of affordable, shared single-family homes. However, people with DD have a wide range of affordable housing needs in addition to single-family homes. Their needs vary based on personal preferences and levels of support required. Some people live independently, while others need 24-hour support. Furthermore, accessible housing that is affordable is lacking for people with DD. Many more units need to be created that are adaptable so that people are able to stay in their home as their needs change.

The goal of the HIPDD funds is to support all persons enrolled to receive DDD services in obtaining affordable housing opportunities that are integrated into the community. The 2004 HIPDD funding priorities include setting aside units in multi-family housing for adults with DD and for families with a child with a developmental disability.

The HIPDD program includes a method for buying down rents so that rents are affordable to persons at 16 percent of median income (the average income for adults with DD). The program provides for accessibility modification requirements. Differ-

ent sizes and number of units can be set aside in a project. Project sponsors will receive funding commitments for a combination of accessibility modifications and buy-down funds in an amount up to \$50,000 per unit.

The HIPDD focus group provided critical feedback from affordable housing developers to the proposed program guidelines. Thoughtful and specific recommendations were made to make the program work better.

KCHCD has already funded one project this year with the HIPDD fund: the Downtown Action To Save Housing's (DASH) Plum Court project, a 66-unit development in Kirkland. The project will include three three-bedroom units for persons with DD who currently pay most of their income on rent in private market housing. The majority of funding in the Plum Court project went to accessibility modifications, with rents made affordable through additional subsidies. The project is currently undergoing rehab, with people moving in February 2004. Plum Court will provide nine people with DD the opportunity to live in this larger housing community with affordable rents and within walking distance of downtown Kirkland.

HIPDD funding and program guidelines will be published as part of the 2004 City of Seattle Office of Housing Notice of Funding Availability and the King County Housing Finance Program Request for Proposals.

For more information, contact Beth Boram, developmental disabilities housing planner with King County Housing and Community Development, at (206) 296-8639 or beth.boram@metrokc.gov.



Plum Court is a 66-unit development in Kirkland sponsored by Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH). It will provide affordable housing for nine people with developmental disabilities. Photo courtesy of DASH.

New Criteria for FHLB Program

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle has established new scoring criteria for their Affordable Housing Program (AHP) in 2004. Applications are due April 1 and October 1, 2004. An estimated \$11.1 million is available.

The First District Priority is homeownership. Applications that create owner-occupied housing, where at least 50 percent of the units are occupied by first-time homebuyers, will receive 15 points.

The Second District Priority gives extra points to the following: special needs housing (nine points); preservation of expiring Section 8, tax credit or USDA housing (seven points); Native housing (five points); and farm worker housing (two points).

The creation of rental housing for homeless households will continue to receive five points as in previous years. Mixed-income homeownership or rental housing can receive four points, or alternatively, mixed-use housing

in which at least five percent of the total square footage of the project is designated for a non-housing, income-producing tenant can also receive four points.

For information about the FHLB Affordable Housing Program, contact Laurie Oettinger at laurieo@fhlbsea.com or Tim Gerstmann at timg@fhlbsea.com. The website is www.fhlbsea.com.



King County Restores Housing Funds

Despite deepening budget shortfalls for King County, on November 25 the King County Council passed a \$508 million current expense budget for 2004 that includes approximately \$12.5 million for human services—the current level for 2003. This funding includes a \$7 million payment by the county's solid waste fund for use of the Cedar Hills landfill, as proposed by Executive Ron Sims.

This innovative revenue stream was initially met with significant opposition by suburban city officials. Housing and human service advocates from the King County Alliance for Human Services rallied around this funding source. The Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County supported full funding for the Housing Opportunity Fund. Councilman Larry Phillips, chair of budget and fiscal management, and other council members led the successful effort to overcome the opposition and to approve this new funding source.

In the County's 2004 budget, \$1 million is allo-

cated and restored to the Housing Opportunity Fund, which was zeroed out in 2003 because of the budget shortfall. The county will also have approximately \$3.8 million in HB 2060 money (document stamp tax revenue) to add to the housing budget in 2004, for a total of \$4.8 million.

"We are thrilled with the Council's action to support community health, housing and human services in these difficult budget times," said Steve Daschle of the King County Alliance for Human Services. "However, now the Executive and Council must begin the real work of finding a dedicated revenue stream to maintain and expand levels of funding for those purposes."

Council budget chair Phillips also included language directing King County to coordinate with the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and locate a county-owned facility for emergency shelter for homeless women or pay a penalty of \$100,000. Several King County government buildings are located in downtown Seattle and can be used for critically needed overnight shelter. The Executive is to report to the Council with a list of possible sites in early February 2004.

"Finding a safe location to shelter women who are homeless is a priority for 2004," said Councilmember Phillips. "King County currently provides limited shelter in its downtown administration building and will also be searching for an appropriate county location for Tent City. King County knows that our community's safety net is at risk and we are finding ways to help our most vulnerable citizens cope with homelessness."

For information about the King County Alliance for Human Services, email KCAHS@shscoalition.org or contact Steve Daschle at sdaschle@swyfs.org.



HUD Housing Awards for Seniors and People with Disabilities

HUD recently announced funding for three new Section 202 projects in Washington state to provide Supportive Housing for the Elderly:

- 50 units were awarded to the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart: \$4.5 million capital advance and \$925,500 in rental subsidy.
- 25 units were awarded to National Church Residences in Deer Park: \$1.8 million capital advance and \$374,500 in rental subsidy.
- 31 units were awarded to the Stillaguamish Senior Center in Arlington: \$2.8 million in capital advance and \$566,500 for rental subsidy.

One Section 811 project providing Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities was awarded for 12 units to Northwest Regional Facilitators in Moses Lake. This includes an \$844,400 capital advance and \$187,500 in rental subsidy.



The Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart received FHLB & HUD Section 202 funding for 50 units of housing for seniors in Seattle. Rendering courtesy of GGLO.



King County Councilmember Larry Phillips.

National Conference on Supportive Housing, AIDS Housing and Ending Homelessness

BY RACHEL MOORHEAD

We are pleased to report that the 2003 national conference “*New Partnerships for Ending Homelessness: Housing, Services, and Employment*,” was an unqualified success! From July 16–19, 1,300 participants from over 49 states, Canada, Ghana and Puerto Rico came to Washington, D.C. to learn more and share strategies about housing and support services for those living with HIV/AIDS and those who are homeless. Participants included a wide range of professionals, consumers and providers involved in housing for people with AIDS, supportive housing for homeless people, housing strategies for families, and delivery of employment, treatment and other services. Washington State was well represented, with more than 40 participants attending.

This conference marks the inaugural collaborative effort of the three sponsoring agencies: AIDS Housing of Washington, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. The unique strengths of each of these agencies made this an ideal union of resources and experience. AIDS Housing of Washington’s (AHW) mission is to increase and sustain the quality and quantity of HIV/AIDS housing resources in the United States. Its two main areas of focus are housing development in Seattle-King County and the National Technical Assistance Program (NTAP), which is funded principally by the HUD’s Office of HIV/AIDS Housing. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) has been working to end homelessness in the United States for over a decade and assists in the creation of supportive housing through technical assistance, grant making and lending, advocacy, and research. In 2000, The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) unveiled a strategic plan to end homelessness in ten years, and this conference was part of the framework designed to achieve that goal.

The conference comprised four days of workshops, roundtables and networking with over 80 sessions featuring a wide array of topics, such as effectively working with boards of trustees, developing low-income housing, and housing ex-prisoners. It was a special thrill to see the general sessions filled to capacity with overflow crowds and to hear how many new alliances and contacts were made across our various agencies and systems.

The opening day of the conference focused on AIDS and supportive housing, and offered sessions designed to address issues specific to housing providers, developers and consumers. During the general

conference, advocacy was encouraged; attendees were able to participate in Lobby Day, where they had the opportunity to meet with Congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. On the final day of the conference, consultations were available by appointment with technical assistance experts, including AHW staff members Donald Chamberlain, Mariah Ybarra and Kelly Zelenka.

Keynote speakers included Congressman Barney Frank (D-Mass.); The Enterprise Foundation COO Terri Montague; AIDS Housing of Washington Executive Director Betsy Lieberman; writer, photojournalist and physician Lonny Shavelson, and Black AIDS Institute Executive Director Phill Wilson. There were also a number of outstanding exhibits, including a collection of photographs from North Carolina’s Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSAs).

With the help of generous foundation and corporate grants, including those from Washington Mutual and The Enterprise Foundation, scholarships to the conference were awarded to those from rural areas, communities of color and other historically underserved populations.

Conference evaluations and responses are overwhelmingly favorable, as 83 percent of participants said they would attend another conference. One attendee reported: “I have attended many conferences and without question, this was the best.”

Rachel Moorhead is the training and publications coordinator with AIDS Housing of Washington. For more information, contact Rachel at Rachel@aidshousing.org or visit www.aidshousing.org.



AHW Executive Director Betsy Lieberman (left), CSH President and CEO Carla Javits, and NAEH President Nan Roman at the national conference.

Photo courtesy of the CSH.

New Book on Predatory Lending

Predatory Bender: America in the Aughts by Matthew Lee combines a novel about the nitty-gritty of high-cost loans of a subprime lender with a 100-page how-to guide for consumers and community organizations on strategies to fight predatory lending. It's available for \$19.95 through South Bronx-based Inner City Press (www.InnerCityPress.org).

Tenants Advocacy Workshops

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and the Tenants Union are holding free workshops to share inside tips on how tenants can advocate more effectively with legislators. Childcare, language interpretation and lunch provided. Spokane workshop is February 7; Seattle workshop is April 24. Contact Megan Farley at (206) 442-9455 or megan@wlihn.org.

CRA Conference

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) annual conference, "Bringing Economic Justice Home," will be held March 10-13, 2004, in Washington, D.C. Visit www.ncrc.org for registration forms and details.

Hunger Increases

A new USDA report shows that food insecurity and hunger increased in the United States in 2002 for the third consecutive year. Since 1999, food insecurity has increased by 3.9 million individuals—2.8 million adults and more than one million children. The

report states that the increase is clearly tied to the increased poverty rate. To view the report, visit www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr35/.

Fair Housing Handbook

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law released a new edition of its handbook, "What 'Fair Housing' Means for People with Disabilities." It explains the housing rights of people with disabilities and how they can take advantage of federal laws while searching for housing. The cost is \$4. Order at www.bazelon.org or call (202) 467-5730, ext. 110.

Save the Date!
Housing Advocacy Day is January 29, 2004 in Olympia. For more information, contact the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance at (206) 442-9455 or mail@wlihn.org.



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