



Housing Washington

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INSIDE

2 HUD Report on Homeless Veterans

3 VHS Levy

4 NLIHC Annual Conference

6 City of Seattle Housing Levy Awards

7 Jackson Street Project Serves Seniors

8 Mayor's Conference Releases Report

9 King County One Night Count

10 National Housing Trust Fund

13 Bainbridge Island Housing Program

15 Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day

Senator Murray Shows Support for HUD-VASH Vouchers

By Jill Davies

On March 21st, Washington state Senator Patty Murray held a press conference at McDermott Place in Seattle's Lake City neighborhood to show support for HUD-VASH Vouchers, which are being threatened with cuts in the House budget.

The vouchers are part of HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) to eliminate homelessness among veterans. Senator Murray provided \$75 million nationwide to fund the HUD-VASH program in a Senate spending bill last year. Under the HUD-VASH program, housing authorities receive vouchers that can be used for rental assistance in the local community. The local Veterans Affairs (VA) then works on outreach efforts to identify homeless veterans who can be provided with vouchers. Each rental assistance voucher is valued at roughly \$7,500 and provides rental assistance for a housing unit for a homeless veteran and any family members. A new spending proposal by House Republicans in H.R. 1 would cut 10,000 housing vouchers that would keep homeless veterans off the streets next year.

"I am deeply concerned that the House of Representatives has eliminated this program in their budget and we are fighting very hard to try to get the money back in. That's why we're here today," said Senator Murray. "These guys served our country. They fought for all of us. They shouldn't be on the streets. We should be doing everything we can to give

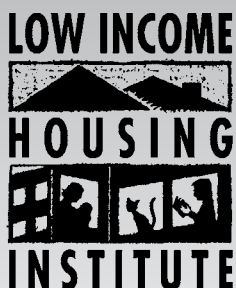


Senator Patty Murray held a press conference at McDermott Place in Seattle's Lake City neighborhood to show support for the HUD-VASH Vouchers, which are being threatened with cuts in the House budget.

them the services they need to be in stable housing and to get back on their feet because they still have a lot more to give. I know our country is struggling right now with the budget that needs to be balanced, and we need to balance it – but not on the backs of people who have paid the price already. So I'm working very hard back in DC to get this HUD-VASH program back."

The press conference was held at McDermott Place, which was developed by the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and has 10 project-based HUD-VASH vouchers for homeless veterans. Senator Murray was a key sponsor of funding for the building, specifically for the North Helpline Food Bank located on the 1st floor. Several residents of the building were given the opportunity to speak at the press conference.

"I became homeless for the first time for a year at the age of 69. My landlady didn't like the fact that I was sneaking veterans into my apartment at night so they could just sleep peacefully, take a shower, do whatever you need to do for 4 or 5 hours to re-civilize yourself before being homeless again. This is a soldier's heaven, said Bud Gump, a McDermott Place resident and military veteran.



VA & HUD Issue First-Ever Report on Homeless Veterans

In February, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the first authoritative analysis of the extent and nature of homelessness among veterans. According to HUD and VA's assessment, nearly 76,000 veterans were homeless on a given night in 2009 while roughly 136,000 veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during that year.

This unprecedented assessment is based on an annual report HUD provides to Congress and explores in greater depth the demographics of veterans who are homeless, how the number of veterans compares to others who are homeless, and how veterans access and use the nation's homeless response system. HUD's report, *Veteran Homelessness: A Supplement to the 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* examines the data in the department's annual report to Congress in-depth.

The report documents that veterans represented approximately 12 percent of all homeless persons counted nationwide during the 2009 'point-in-time' count. According to that report, more than 3,000 cities and counties reported 75,609 homeless veterans on a single night in January of 2009. 57 percent were staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program while the remaining 43 percent were unsheltered.

During a 12-month period in 2009, an estimated 136,000 veterans – or about 1 in every 168 veterans – spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. The vast majority of sheltered homeless veterans (96 percent) experienced homelessness alone while a much smaller share (four percent) was part of a family. Sheltered homeless veterans are most often individual white men

between the ages of 31 and 50 and living with a disability.

Low-income veterans are twice as likely to become homeless compared to all low-income adults. HUD and VA also examined the likelihood of becoming homeless among American veterans with particular demographic characteristics. In 2009, twice as many poor Hispanic veterans used a shelter at some point during the year compared with poor non-Hispanic veterans. African American veterans in poverty had similar rates of homelessness.

Most veterans who used emergency shelter stayed for only brief periods. One-third stayed in shelter for less than one week; 61 percent used a shelter for less than one month; and 84% stayed for less than three months. The report also concluded that veterans remained in shelters longer than did non-veterans. In 2009, the median length of stay for veterans who were alone was 21 days in an emergency shelter and 117 days in transitional housing. By contrast, non-veteran individuals stayed in an emergency shelter for 17 days and 106 days in transitional housing.

The report studied the path homeless veterans take into the shelter system and found most veterans come from another homeless location and few entered the shelter system from their own housing or from housing provided by family or friends. Sheltered homeless veterans are far more likely to be alone rather than part of a family household; 96 percent of veterans are individuals compared to 63 percent in the overall homeless population.

According to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki, "with our federal, state and community partners working together, more veterans are moving into safe housing, but we're not done yet. Providing assistance in



According to the nationwide 2009 'point-in-time' count, more than 3,000 cities and counties reported 75,609 homeless Veterans on a single night in January. Photo by Patryce Haltiwanger Phillips, courtesy of Creative Commons.

mental health, substance abuse treatment, education and employment goes hand-in-hand with preventive steps and permanent supportive housing. We continue to work towards our goal of finding every Veteran safe housing and access to needed services."

For more information on VA's efforts to end homelessness among veterans, visit the VA website at www.va.gov/homelessness. Read the full 2009 HUD report at www.hudhre.info/documents/2009AHA RVeteransReport.pdf.

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King County Veterans and Human Services Levy: Changing the Lives of Thousands in Need

By Sherry Hamilton

Just over five years ago, in November 2005, King County voters overwhelmingly approved the Veterans and Human Services Levy. Since that general election vote, the funds raised by the levy have helped more than 60,000 veterans and their family members and other low-income individuals and families throughout the county achieve healthier and more stable lives. Approved for a six year period, the levy will expire December 31, 2011 unless it is renewed by voters this year.

The current Veterans and Human Services Levy taxes homeowners at a rate of 5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The contribution of a typical homeowner is about \$15 a year. The levy raises about \$13 million per year, half of which is dedicated to helping veterans, military personnel and their families, with the other half dedicated to assisting working families and vulnerable residents, including seniors and people with disabilities.

Providing support to those most in need

The levy invests in cost-effective, proven methods in four strategic areas: improving and enhancing services for veterans; ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment; increasing access to behavioral health services; and strengthening families at risk. The goals are simple: to prevent or reduce homelessness and emergency medical costs and prevent or reduce criminal justice system involvement.

Creating housing and helping to end homelessness

Levy funds have been instrumental in helping to prevent homelessness and in creating new units of supportive

housing throughout the county. Thanks to levy-funded prevention programs, 93 percent of at-risk families who received one-time assistance with rent or mortgage payments were still in their housing a year later. In addition, levy funding helped to create 543 new units of housing combined with services for veterans and their families and other vulnerable people.

Through 2010, a total of \$41 million from the Veterans and Human Services Levy had been allocated to regional efforts to end homelessness. Because levy funds leverage other funding sources, the Veterans and Human Services Levy is a major player in the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. In fact, the leveraged amount totals \$181,684,672 – a leverage ratio of over \$4 for every dedicated levy dollar. Levy dollars have also supported the successful Landlord Liaison Project, funding a risk reduction fund to induce private landlords to open their units to formerly homeless people with less than ideal financial histories. Funding also supports two supportive housing projects for people with serious mental illness with prior histories in the criminal justice system.

Successes of the Levy

The majority of funds from the Veterans and Human Services Levy are contracted to community-based agencies who provide a wide range of programs, along with direct services provided through King County such as the Nurse Family Partnership and the King County Veterans' Program. The successes of the Veterans and Human Services Levy, include:

- Expansion of the Veterans Program from a single downtown Seattle site to ten walk-in sites around the County;



In January 2011, King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson introduced an ordinance calling for renewal of the Veterans and Human Services Levy.

- A 95 percent success rate in reducing the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among veterans in treatment;
- Improved health and stability for 84 percent of veterans and their families enrolled in services;
- Improved access to mental health and substance abuse services, opening the doors to treatment for more than 8,000 low-income residents;
- Healthy child development programs to strengthen low-income families with young children.

Next steps

In January 2011, King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson, joined by Councilmembers Pete von Reichbauer and Reagan Dunn, introduced an ordinance calling for renewal of the levy. That ordinance has been forwarded to both the King County Regional Policy Committee and the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee for consideration. It proposes a straight levy renewal and could be voted on in either the primary or general election.

King County Executive Dow Constantine is also exploring the issue of levy renewal. The King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), which administers the levy, is conducting a thorough review of the current levy strategies and accomplishments achieved. Anna Markee joined DCHS in October 2010 to lead the effort to examine the results of the current levy and develop options and

continued on page 5

No More Crumbs! Housing Activists Convene in DC for Annual NLIHC Conference

By Sharon Lee

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) held its 2011 Annual Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day on March 28-30 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. It was a crucial time to be in our nation's Capitol to fight the House Republicans' draconian cuts proposed under H.R. 1. This bill would slash FY11 funding for public housing capital funds by more than 43%, cut the Community Development Block Grant program by 66%, and eliminate 10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers that house homeless veterans.

H.R. 1 would cut more than \$5.7 billion from HUD at a time when our nation is experiencing rising numbers of homeless people, a loss of 900,000 affordable housing units and more Americans than ever with worst case housing needs. As stated by George Moses, NLIHC Board Chair, in his opening remarks: "These cuts, these injustices, cannot be tolerated."

Sheila Crowley, NLIHC President and CEO, introduced Michelle Singletary, the first keynote speaker. Singletary is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated writer whose column "The Color of Money" is featured in more than 100 newspapers across the country. Singletary gave a rousing speech and blasted Congress for the cuts to housing: "Everything should be on the table, some things cannot get cut.....Affordable housing should be a fundamental right." She noted that 60% of the Senate freshmen and 40% of the House freshmen are millionaires. These "millionaire politicians" have a belief that low income people are not working hard enough and should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, she remarked.

Singletary spoke about her own life experience growing up poor

and how she only became a homeowner when she received assistance from an affordable home ownership program in Baltimore. She said she did not have any bootstraps! In quoting Cushing Dolbeare, the founder of NLIHC, her advice to those lobbying Congress was: "Don't ask for crumbs, demand that the whole loaf be given. Be bold and ask for what you want." She urged the audience to go to Capitol Hill and: "Press on, so that many will not be pushed out.....Ask for what you need, not what you think you can get." By the end of her speech, Singletary had the entire audience on their feet chanting: "No more crumbs, no more crumbs!"

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan was the luncheon speaker and talked about the President's 2012 priorities for families who live in HUD financed housing, how to improve HUD programs, and the tough choices ahead. Progress is being made on President Obama's agenda for "Winning the Future." While more than 750,000 jobs were lost in the recession, Donovan made note of the progress: we now have "the lowest unemployment rate in two years and created 220,000 jobs just last month." Nevertheless, the recession took the greatest toll on low-income households, who experienced the biggest increase in worst case housing needs between 2007 and 2009.

In tough times HUD will seek to protect existing residents and 80% of the budget will go towards renewing homeless and rental assistance and the public housing stock. The President's budget proposes to double supportive housing and makes savings in other areas to fund programs such as HUD-VASH. "Investing in homelessness



Michelle Singletary (left) columnist for *The Color of Money* was a keynote speaker at the NLIHC conference. On her right is Sheila Crowley, President of NLIHC.

prevention is smart government," said Donovan, noting that it will help end the revolving door of poverty and homelessness. Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing have saved 875,000 people from homelessness. The President's goal is to end chronic and veterans' homelessness by 2015, and to end homelessness for children by 2020.

The President wants to reform the American system of financing. Donovan stated that we "cannot blame the housing crisis on its victims." Whatever system replaces Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac must have a permanent reliable source of funding for the National Housing Trust Fund.

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance coordinated a delegation of 10 people from Washington state to journey to Washington, DC and visit members of Congress. In addition to the Alliance, the organizations who sent representatives included Beacon Development, Benson East Tenants Association, Common Ground, Low Income Housing Institute, Sound Thinking, and the Tenants Union. The advocates were united in opposing the cuts in H.R. 1, and other top legislative priorities included:

1. Support President Obama's request for \$1 billion in dedicated funds for the National Housing Trust Fund in FY12. Washington state would receive \$22.7 million annually.
2. Provide sufficient FY12 funding for HUD's rental housing programs including tenant based and project based Section 8, Section 202 for the elderly, Section 811 for persons with disabilities and public housing capital and operating funds.
3. Fund the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants at \$2.4 billion for FY11 and FY12.
4. Implement the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.
5. Support targeting the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program by requiring that at least 25% of resources

go to households with incomes below 30% of area median.

6. Reform the mortgage interest deduction (MID) that primarily benefits those earning over \$100,000 and costs taxpayers \$88 billion in 2011 to a tax credit that would help lower income households.

Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), ranking member of the House Financial Services Committee, spoke about financial reforms and housing policies. He awarded the 2nd Annual State and Local Organizing Award to Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) in Massachusetts for fighting a ballot measure to repeal the state's affordable housing laws. Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN) addressed the conference on resident rights and HUD's new initiative on Transforming Rental Assistance. He authored and secured passage of the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2009.

Two individuals were honored by the NLIHC at the Housing Leadership Awards reception. Nan Roman, President and CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness received the Edward W. Brooke, III Housing Leadership Award. Florence Wagner Roisman, Professor at the Indiana University School of Law received the Cushing Niles Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award.

Washington state is fortunate to have housing advocates who can dedicate their time to stopping cuts to public housing, saving tenant-based rental assistance, preserving community development programs and protecting our veterans. But in order to ensure that these vital programs continue to serve the people who need them, we all need to stand up and shout "No More Crumbs!"

Sharon Lee is Executive Director of the Low Income Housing Institute. For information on the NLIHC go to www.NLIHC.org

HUD-VASH Vouchers

continued from page 1

"The One Night Count that just took place in January found 2,442 people sleeping outside. And Veterans are over-represented in the homeless population. President Obama and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki have announced a 5 Year Plan to end homelessness among veterans. I think we would all support that. But the way to make that happen is to have housing such as this and to have programs like HUD-VASH vouchers," said LIHI Executive Director Sharon Lee.

Jill Davies is Executive Assistant at the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information about the HUD-VASH program visit www.hud.gov.

As Housing Washington was going to press, on April 12, 2011, Congress approved H.R. 1473 which restores \$50 million for new permanent supportive housing vouchers for chronically homeless veterans.

Veterans and Human Services Levy

continued from page 3

recommendations for the future. Formerly with the Housing Development Consortium, Markee is leading efforts to assess emerging community needs in housing and human services, and conducting a series of public and stakeholder outreach presentations to gather input to inform the planning process. That work will continue through the month of March. County Executive Constantine will forward his recommendations to the King County Council later this spring.

Sherry Hamilton is Communications Manager for the Veterans and Human Services Levy. For more information on levy programs and accomplishments contact Sherry at sherry.hamilton@kingcounty.gov. For more information about the Veterans and Human Services Levy or the levy renewal planning go to www.kingcounty.gov/dchs.



Rachael Myers and Moque Krape of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance with Sharon Lee of the Low Income Housing Institute at the Capitol Building for the NLIHC conference. Photo by Donald Chamberlain

Seattle Housing Levy Awards

By Joshua Okrent

The City of Seattle Office of Housing has announced nearly \$23 million in capital funding to create and preserve affordable apartments. The investment will help create 375 new units for seniors, homeless individuals, and low-income working families, plus rehabilitate another 291 apartments. The announcements were made at Cyndy's Pancake House on Aurora Avenue North, the future location of one of the developments for homeless individuals.

Most of the funding comes from the Seattle Housing Levy, which was approved for renewal by Seattle voters in November 2009. The awards are the first for rental housing from the seven-year \$145 million levy administered by the Office of Housing.

"Having housing throughout our community that is affordable to people from all walks of life, people with varying economic situations, is what makes our neighborhoods vibrant and inviting," said Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith. "This funding will help hundreds of seniors and people with disabilities remain in their current homes, put roofs over the heads of so many who are currently living on the street, plus provide new opportunities for our hard-working, low- to moderate-wage neighbors."

In this funding round, every dollar contributed by the Office of Housing will leverage nearly \$4 of additional non-city funding. The funded projects represent an estimated total of almost \$110 million in capital that will be a major investment in neighborhoods from North Seattle to Capitol Hill to the Rainier Valley, revitalizing the communities and providing living-wage jobs.

At the award announcement, City Councilmember Nick Licata, chair

of the Council's Housing, Human Services, Health & Culture Committee, said, "We really need to recognize the generosity of Seattle voters. Despite the recession, they voted to continue taxing themselves to ensure that the less fortunate among us, those with the fewest resources, still have access to safe, decent affordable housing."

The economic recession has made efforts to expand the city's stock of affordable housing that much more necessary and immediate. Yet the economy also has offered opportunities to stretch dollars further because of lower costs for land and construction. With additional levy dollars, the Office of Housing had about 65% more funding available to award than in past rounds, funding more units than in 2008 and 2009 combined.

Funding from the Office of Housing allows eight area non-profit organizations to:

- Rehabilitate and preserve five buildings that currently house seniors and people with disabilities;
- Construct one new building that will serve homeless seniors;
- Construct three new apartment buildings with a total of 232 units that will house formerly homeless individuals while providing onsite supportive services;
- Construct three new buildings that will be affordable to households earning about half of the area median income—roughly \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year.

The new developments include:

Aurora Supportive Housing

The Downtown Emergency Service Center will receive up to \$4.5 million for Aurora Supportive Housing, on the corner of Aurora Avenue North and North 105th Street. This permanent housing will serve highly vulnerable homeless individuals with onsite supportive services.

Jackson Street Housing

The Low Income Housing Institute will receive up to \$2.76 million for Jackson Street Housing, to be located at 2010 South Jackson Street, which will serve low-income seniors 55 and older.

Pontius Apartments

Plymouth Housing Group will receive up to \$2.23 million for the construction of the Pontius Apartments, which will be located in the Cascade/South Lake Union neighborhood. The building will provide 81 studio apartments for chronically homeless single men and women.

Artspace Mt. Baker Lofts

Artspace will receive up to \$1.8 million for the Mt. Baker Lofts, to be constructed at the former site of a Firestone Complete Auto Care next to the Mt. Baker Light Rail Station along Rainier Avenue South. The project will include 51 units designed to meet the needs of artists and their families with annual incomes up to \$41,000 for a two-person household.

Sunset House

Housing Resources Group will receive up to \$2.29 million to preserve Sunset House, an existing federally-assisted 82-unit apartment building in the Belltown neighborhood. Sunset House is home to seniors and people with disabilities who largely earn less than 30% of area median income. The funding will help HRG acquire and rehabilitate the building, while preserving affordability for current and future tenants.

12th & Jefferson Workforce Housing

Capitol Hill Housing will receive up to \$2.4 million for the construction of workforce housing at the corner of 12th Avenue and East Jefferson Street in Capitol Hill. The building will include 40 apartments that will be affordable to households earning up to 60% of area median income.

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Block 43

Mercy Housing Northwest will receive up to \$3.9 million for construction of Block 43, a 52-unit affordable workforce housing project in the Rainier Vista master development along Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and South Oregon Street. The units will be affordable to households earning up to 50% and 60% of area median income.

Seattle Senior Housing Program buildings

Seattle Housing Authority will receive up to \$3 million to rehabilitate four existing senior housing projects: Blakely Manor near University Village; Bitterlake Manor in the Bitterlake neighborhood; Olmstead Manor near Green Lake; and Nelson Manor in Ballard. The current population in these apartments consists primarily of extremely low-income seniors; additionally, 10% of the units are set aside for persons with disabilities regardless of age.

For more information contact Julie Moore at the City of Seattle at (206) 684-0604.

Jackson Street Project Provides Homes for Seniors

By Elaine Ko

The Low Income Housing Institute will start construction this summer on 61-units for low income and homeless seniors. The Jackson Street Housing project was awarded capital funding of \$2,763,660 from the City of Seattle, \$500,000 from King County, and \$650,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco in partnership with US Bank. Tax credits were allocated by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

“The Jackson Street Housing project represents another step forward in addressing the affordable housing needs of aging Baby Boomers,” said LIHI Executive Director Sharon Lee. Over the next 19 years, an average of 10,000 boomers will turn 65 every day. In a May 2010 Pew Center survey, 57% of baby boomers said their financial situation had deteriorated since the recession began in 2007. Many boomers are faced with fixed or declining incomes and few affordable housing options as they struggle to survive. In addition to the explosion of the senior population, King County has an estimated 1,000 individuals

over age 55 who are homeless and 6,700 seniors already on the waiting list for low-income rental housing.

“The apartments are for low-income people age 55 and older and the inexpensive land price helps keep this project affordable,”

Lee stated. “We are thankful to our funding partners, The United Way of King County and the citizens of Seattle who voted to support the Seattle Housing Levy. The Levy’s Acquisition and Opportunity Loan program and United Way provided funds to purchase this property for much-needed housing for homeless and low-income seniors in our community.”

LIHI acquired the site at 2010 South Jackson Street, located in Seattle’s Central Area, in 2010 from the Bank of Washington for \$1.7 million, about half the price another developer paid for it in 2006. The 61 units for seniors will take up half the site, with another phase to be built in the near future consisting of 50 units of workforce housing.

Runberg Architecture Group is designing the \$13 million, 45,000 sq. ft. apartment complex featuring 61 studios and one-bedroom units. One unit is designated for a resident manager. Common space on the first floor includes a library, computer center, communal kitchen, fitness room, classroom, manager’s office and service space. Plans include parking and a “P-Patch” garden for the residents. LIHI is partnering with Sound Mental Health as the social services provider. Operation Nightwatch will provide referrals and volunteers to assist the seniors.

Walsh Construction has been selected as the contractor. The building will include many green features and exceed the State’s Evergreen standard. US Bank is the construction lender. LIHI is in the process of selecting a tax credit investor. Construction will start in August and be completed in 2012.

For more information about the Low Income Housing Institute and Jackson Street Housing visit www.lihi.org.



LIHI’s new Jackson Street project will provide 61 units for low-income people age 55 and older. Rendering courtesy of Runberg Architects.

Hunger and Homelessness Remain Most Pressing Issues for US Cities

By Joshua Okrent

For more than 25 years, The US Conference of Mayors has annually documented the magnitude of the issues of hunger and homelessness in American cities as well as efforts cities are making to address these challenges. The most recently released report by the Conference, *Hunger and Homelessness in US Cities*, covers the period September 2009 to August 2010, and shows the impact of rising unemployment and housing costs as well as low wages on the most vulnerable sections of America's urban society.

Hunger and homelessness are among the most pressing issues faced by US cities. During 2010 the number of people experiencing homelessness increased across major cities by an average of 2%, while requests for emergency food assistance rose by 24%. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said: "Even working families are increasingly facing hunger and homelessness as a result of the crippled economy and rising unemployment."

Increasing Hunger

Every city surveyed reported that the number of requests for emergency food assistance increased over the past year. Across the cities, the number of requests for food assistance increased by an average of 24%. Nearly one-third of the cities surveyed reported that demand for assistance increased by 30% or more. The rate of increase ranged from 62% in Philadelphia and 60% in Des Moines to 9% in Boston, 8% in Phoenix and Dallas, and 2% in Portland.

Nine in 10 of the cities reported an increase in the number of persons requesting food assistance for the first time. Increased requests for food assistance were accompanied by more frequent visits to food pantries and

emergency kitchens. Nine in 10 of the 20 cities able to respond to the question reported an increase in the frequency that persons visit food pantries and/or emergency kitchens each month.

When asked to identify the three main causes of hunger in their cities, most survey cities named unemployment; this was followed by high housing costs, low wages and poverty, lack of access to SNAP, and medical or health costs.

Based on the current state of public and private agency budgets, 56% of the cities expect resources to provide emergency food assistance will decrease moderately over the next year, and 8% expect them to decrease substantially. Nearly one-third of the cities expect these resources to continue at about the same level. Cleveland alone expects a moderate increase in resources.

Increasing Homelessness

Over the past year, the total number of persons experiencing homelessness increased in 52% of the 27 cities surveyed by the Conference of Mayors, decreased in 36% of the cities; and stayed the same in three of the cities (Asheville, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis). Across these cities, there was an overall increase of 2% in the total number of persons experiencing homelessness. The change ranged from a 26% decrease in Des Moines and a 12% decrease in Kansas City, to an 11% increase in Providence, 14% increase in Charlotte, 15% increase in Nashville, and 26% increase in Charleston.

The survey cities reported that, over the past year, the number of homeless families increased in 58% of the cities, decreased in 21% of the cities, and stayed the same in 21% of the cities. Across the cities, there

was an overall increase of 9% in the total number of families experiencing homelessness. The change ranged from an 81% increase in Charleston, a 36% increase in Charlotte, and a 31% increase in Portland, to a 1% decline in Boston, 2% decline in Louisville and Norfolk, 6% decline in Phoenix, and 38% decline in Gastonia, NC.

"DURING 2010 THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS INCREASED ACROSS MAJOR CITIES BY AN AVERAGE OF 2%."

When asked to identify the three main causes of homelessness among their households with children, 76% of the cities cited unemployment, 72% cited lack of affordable housing, followed by poverty, domestic violence, and low-paying jobs.

When asked to identify the three main causes of homelessness among unaccompanied individuals, 31% of the cities cited the lack of affordable housing, 19% cited mental illness and the lack of needed services, another 19% cited substance abuse and the lack of needed services, and 15% cited poverty.

Given the current state of public and private agency budgets, officials in 48% of the cities expect resources to provide emergency shelter to continue at about the same level. Those in 40% of the cities expect these resources to decrease moderately, and Gastonia and Sacramento project a substantial decrease in these resources - meaning that a total of 48% of the cities expect a decrease in these resources.

More information on the annual report is at www.usmayors.org.

King County's One Night Count Finds a Decrease in Numbers of Homeless People Sleeping in the Streets

By Joshua Okrent

On January 28, Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH) Director Alison Eisinger announced that the number of people counted outside in King County is down 11% over one year. Volunteer teams working through the night counted 2,442 people living on the streets of King County. The people were of every age, race and gender. Some were huddled in doorways, some slept in cars; others camped in parking lots or other makeshift campsites.

The One Night Count does not include the estimated 6,000 people staying in emergency shelter and transitional housing overnight. The coalition is also tracking the number of families turned away from shelters because they were full. The complete One Night Count tally will be released as soon as the other data are compiled.

The One Night Count of People who are Homeless is conducted each January to produce a snapshot of the total number of unsheltered individuals on the streets of King County. Ms. Eisinger was joined at the announcement by Bill Block, the Director of the Committee to End Homeless, the regional coalition implementing the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County.

Beginning at 2:00 am, 886 volunteers in 137 teams counted the people sleeping outdoors in King County. The volunteers were organized through ten area headquarters. Counters returned to historical and new count areas in Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Shoreline, Kenmore, Bothell, Seattle, White Center, Federal Way, Kent, Renton, and Auburn. The 2011 One Night Count also collected information from select hospitals about emergency room usage and from Metro night owl buses operating throughout

the county. The numbers released today are understood to represent the minimum number of unsheltered people on this single night.

Some factors that may have contributed to fewer people being counted this year include the fact that winter shelters were open in downtown Seattle and Redmond, filled with 149 people who would otherwise have been outside overnight. This year the 194 bus, a route long described as a "rolling shelter," was replaced by light rail service to SeaTac airport. And, in Auburn, Renton, and Kent, high water flooded out several areas that are usually counted.

The coordinated efforts under the Ten Year Plan to End Homeless to create permanent, supportive housing continue to show strong progress. Local investments in housing and services have resulted in 400 new apartments for homeless people opening in King County in just the last six months of 2010. Over 3,600 units have opened since the start of the plan five and a half years ago. Organizers also note that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included substantial funding for local rental assistance programs and other programs designed to help prevent homelessness.

While all of these programs can be credited for making strides in addressing the problem of homelessness, the expiration of ARRA investments at the federal level, and recently implemented cuts to Washington's safety net – with more expected —will likely put many more people at risk of homelessness and make it more difficult to help people leave homelessness in the coming years.

At the announcement, Ms. Eisinger stated, "The unifying reason that volunteers from all walks of life show up to participate in the count



On January 28, volunteer teams working through the night counted 2,442 people living on the streets of King County.

Photo by Lucid77, Courtesy of Creative Commons

is that we all sincerely hope that our efforts will result in more housing and less homelessness. While our state legislature is preparing to cut billions of dollars from vital services, I hope that people speak up to say that we must continue to create needed housing and jobs, and support our neighbors."

Mr. Block added "As we do this annual count, we have to remember that homelessness as we saw it tonight is a very recent phenomenon. We did not used to have widespread homelessness and many nations around the globe provide the supports necessary to prevent it. The count reminds us that we can and we must end homelessness."

For more information about the Seattle/King County One Night Count contact Alison Eisinger at Alison@homelessinfo.org. For more information about the Ten Year Plan, contact Bill Block at bill.block@kingcounty.gov.

Obama Administration Advances National Housing Trust Fund

By Sheila Crowley

The Obama Administration has recently taken two important steps toward providing funding for the National Housing Trust Fund. First, the President's FY12 budget proposal includes \$1 billion as the initial capitalization for the NHTF. Second, the report issued by the Administration on how to reform the housing finance system in the wake of the foreclosure crisis suggests the creation of a dedicated source of revenue for affordable housing activities and cites the NHTF as such an activity. These two actions are separate and distinct.

\$1 Billion in the Proposed FY12 Budget

President Obama has included \$1 billion for the NHTF in his FY12 budget proposal. It is reported as part of HUD's budget, but on the **mandatory** funding side of the budget. This means that the President is not seeking funding for the NHTF through discretionary appropriations that fund other HUD low income housing programs. This is in keeping with the NHTF Campaign's longstanding position that the NHTF not compete with existing HUD appropriations.

The budget proposal does not identify a specific funding source for the NHTF. Rather, HUD officials plan to look for "opportunities" to include it in legislative vehicles as they arise. Finding a funding source that can gain bipartisan support in the Congress is key to getting it funded this year. The NHTF Campaign will accept any "offset" that does not involve cuts to other services or benefits for low income people.

President Obama also asked for \$1 billion for the NHTF in his FY10 and FY11 budget proposals. In the FY10 budget, the initial source was receipts

to the federal government from Ginnie Mae, the HUD mortgage program. Later in 2009, the Administration determined it would not be possible to use Ginnie Mae funds and proposed an offset that was a tax provision unrelated to housing.

Eventually, the NHTF was included as one of several expenditures in a large tax bill that extended a number of business related tax breaks and offset the cost by raising taxes elsewhere. This bill passed the House of Representatives in late 2009. Several versions of this bill were offered in the Senate as 2010 wore on. All continued to include the NHTF, until the last version in the lame duck session. Eventually, the tax breaks were included in the larger deal struck between the White House and the Senate Republicans that extended the Bush era tax cuts. The NHTF was dropped during those negotiations as it was tagged "new spending."

In the last Congress, the NHTF Campaign sought \$65 million for project based vouchers to accompany the \$1 billion in capital funds. We will do the same in the new Congress. These vouchers would be used for operating subsidies for NHTF units for the lowest income people.

Dedicated Source of Revenue from Housing Finance Reform

The Obama Administration released a "white paper" on February 11 that offered its recommendations for the future of housing finance. In the wake of the financial meltdown precipitated by the foreclosure crisis, the federal government had to take over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) that served as the secondary mortgage provider for many mortgages made in the U.S. This takeover has been at considerable cost to

the federal treasury.

The white paper reflects the Administration's position that the government should play a more limited role in the general mortgage market, but continues to have a duty to help lower income households. In particular, the paper highlights the importance of rental housing and the need to expand its supply for the lowest income households. The paper goes so far as to cite the gap between the number of extremely low income (ELI) renter households and the number of rental homes that they can afford (32 homes for every 100 ELI renters).

The Administration proposes the creation of a dedicated revenue source to pay for several programs that the market would not provide on its own. It uses the NHTF as an example of the kind of program that could be funded through this dedicated revenue source. No details are offered as to where the revenue would come from for the dedicated source.

The NHTF Campaign advocated over the last several months that the NHTF be included in this report and

"THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLAY A MORE LIMITED ROLE IN THE GENERAL MORTGAGE MARKET, BUT CONTINUES TO HAVE A DUTY TO HELP LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS."

that the housing finance industry be required to direct funds toward this purpose. In a letter to the Administration, the Campaign said, "there should be revenue-generating requirements on all financial institutions, including, but not limited to, the next generation of secondary market entities. The

continued on page 12

FY-2012 Budget Changes

The Department of the Treasury's FY-2012 Budget Proposal included two major changes to the low-income housing tax credit. The first change would encourage creating more mixed-income housing by allowing projects to comply with a rule under which the income limits for at least 40 percent of the units in a project could average to not greater than 60 percent of area median income (AMI). None of these units could be occupied by an

individual with income greater than 80 percent of AMI, and any units with income limits less than 20 percent of AMI would be treated as being at 20 percent. The provision would apply to elections under section 42(g)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code that are made after the date of enactment.

The second proposal would allow a 30-percent "basis boost" for LIHTCs for certain projects financed with tax-exempt bonds that are subject to private-activity-bond volume cap (volume cap). The projects receiving

the boost would involve preservation, recapitalization, and rehabilitation of existing housing that was originally financed with Federal funds and is subject to a long-term use agreement limiting occupancy to low-income households. In each State, the boost for buildings financed in whole or in part by tax-exempt bonds issued during a calendar year would be limited to buildings whose financing is assisted with tax-exempt bonds whose aggregate issue price is not more than an amount equal to 0.4 percent of the State's volume cap for the calendar year in which the bonds are issued (regardless which year's volume cap is taken into account in issuing the bonds). The State housing finance agency would determine which preservation projects receive a boost. The proposal would be effective for projects that are financed by bonds issued after the date of enactment.

New Markets Tax Credits

The Treasury budget proposal would also extend and modify the New Markets Tax Credit. The Administration proposes to extend the NMTC through 2012, with an allocation amount of \$5 billion for that year. The Administration also proposes that \$250 million of this \$5 billion be allocated to support

financing healthy food options in distressed communities as part of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative. The proposal would also permit the NMTC to permanently offset alternative minimum tax (AMT) liability.

Build America Bonds

Additionally, the budget proposes to extend and amend the Build America bonds program. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) created the Build America bond program as an optional new lower cost borrowing incentive for State and local governments on taxable bonds issued in 2009 and 2010 to finance new investments in governmental capital projects. Under the original program applicable to Build America bonds issued in 2009 and 2010, the Department of the Treasury makes direct subsidy payments (called "refundable tax credits") to State and local governmental issuers in a subsidy amount equal to 35 percent of the coupon interest on the bonds. The Administration proposes to make the successful Build America bond program permanent at a reduced subsidy level designed to be approximately revenue neutral in comparison to the Federal tax losses from traditional tax-exempt bonds. The Administration also proposes to expand the Build America bond program beyond new investments in governmental capital projects to include certain additional program uses for which State and local governments may use tax-exempt bonds under existing law. The proposed modifications to the Build America bond program would be effective for bonds issued beginning upon the date of enactment.

For more information on these and other program changes at the Department of the Treasury, visit <http://housingonline.com>.



Albers Mill in Tacoma was one of the first projects in the country to use New Markets Tax Credits.

Seattle City Council Updates Multifamily Code

On Monday, December 13, the Seattle City Council unanimously adopted a comprehensive update to how townhomes, apartments, row houses, and cottages are developed in Seattle's low-rise multifamily zones.

These changes will allow for more variety in housing types, improved landscaping and open space use, incentives for green building, along with greater flexibility and improvement in building design.

"Over the past decade, many townhouses popped up and multiplied in ways that caused unfortunate impacts to the surrounding communities," said Councilmember Sally Clark in a press release. "We saw too few other housing styles and what we did see wasn't welcomed by neighbors in most cases. I think these new rules will lead developers to build housing that fits better in our neighborhoods and creates a better home in which to live."

According to the press release, the new code should prevent most of the features that inspired the majority of neighborhood complaints by creating a new Streamlined Design Review (SDR) process that will allow for closer scrutiny of project design. SDR will be required for townhouses with three or more units, but not for row houses, cottages or apartments in multi-family zones.

The new low-rise multifamily code will:

- Encourage a diversity of housing types among townhomes, row houses, cottages, apartments, and auto-court townhomes;
- Require new design features. For example: At least 20 percent of street facing façades must be windows and doors, building materials must be

varied, and townhouse parking garages must be designed to fit large cars;

- Incentivize "green building" and hiding parking underground or at the back of the lot;
- Use the City's "Green Factor" landscaping requirement, incentivizing keeping trees or planting new ones;
- Reduce the number of zones from five to three (LR1, LR2, LR3) for code simplicity;
- Change the low-rise height limits to match the height limit for single family zones in most cases;
- Allow for shared open space, for larger usable common areas;
- Waive parking requirements for projects in growth areas and within .25 mile of frequent transit service (15 minute headways), allowing the market to dictate the level of parking to provide;
- Waive density limits for certain housing types when good design features are achieved;
- Use a new flexible standard of measuring floor space, "Floor Area Ratio," rather than previously restrictive setback and lot coverage requirements.

The multifamily code update was adopted after substantial rounds of review and feedback from neighbors, architects, builders, and other design professionals. Multifamily zones comprise approximately nine percent of the developable land in Seattle and are meant to serve as a transition between single family and commercial zones.

For more information visit <http://seattle.gov/council>

federal government provides private financial institutions with low cost funds through a variety of sources. The most important of these are lenders' ability to borrow from the Federal Reserve and the Federal Home Loan Banks and to acquire low cost deposits based on federal deposit insurance. Congress could also levy a fee on the securitization of mortgages by any capital markets participant and direct these revenues to the National Housing Trust Fund."

The Administration's proposal is the starting point for the legislative debate that will take place over the next two years and likely beyond. The future of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac is a subject of disagreement among policy makers with splits along partisan lines. The fact that the Administration was as specific as it was about the NHTF in its otherwise general paper is a positive step forward.

The legislation that created the NHTF in 2008 was part of a large bill that included reform of the GSEs. The bill directed the GSEs to make contributions to the NHTF. Soon after the bill passed, the financial crisis hit and the GSEs were taken into conservatorship by their federal regulator, who suspended any payments to the NHTF. The fact that Congress has already determined that the housing finance system should be one revenue source for the NHTF serves as the basis for our advocacy going forward.

The continued support and action of NHTF have gotten us to where we are today, and are crucial to moving forward. Together, we are closer than ever to reaching our goal.

Sheila Crowley is Executive Director of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. For more information, including steps you can take to advance the National Housing Trust Fund, visit, www.nlihc.org

Bainbridge Island Housing Program Combines Affordability and Sustainability

Bainbridge Island, Washington is a 27-square-mile island located 35 miles from Seattle in Puget Sound. The island is known for its natural beauty and for its residents' efforts to preserve its green spaces and small-town charm. To balance these needs with ensuring diverse housing options for all residents, in 2009 the City of Bainbridge Island created a housing demonstration program that encourages the development of homes that are innovative, affordable, and sustainable.

The Housing Design Demonstration Project (HDDP) is a three-year pilot program intended to evaluate the compatibility of newer, innovative housing styles with existing land use regulations. The HDDP's primary focus is the Island's downtown area, known as Winslow. Developers interested in participating in the program, which applies to new single-family, multifamily, and mixed-use developments, can submit project proposals to the city for consideration of HDDP status. The applications are evaluated based on proposed housing diversity (including a variety of unit types and sizes), affordability, innovative site and building designs, and green features. Preference is also given to developments that are designed to reduce auto reliance by promoting public transit or alternative transportation methods.

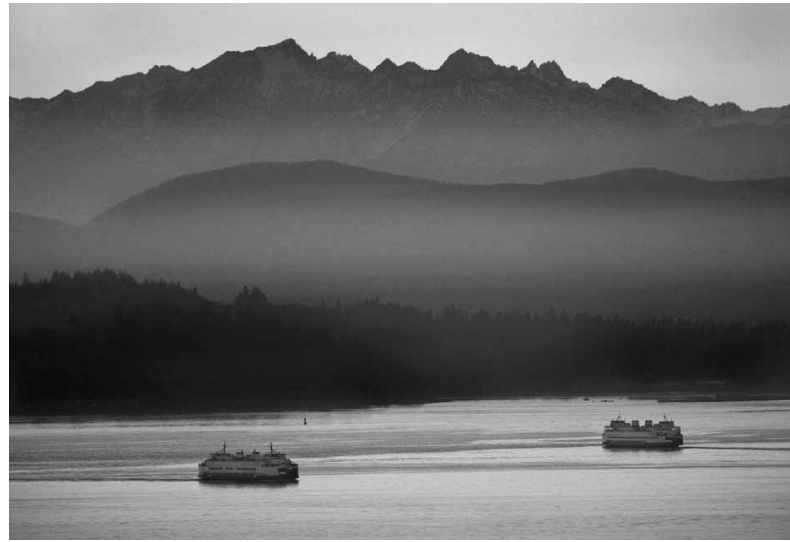
Projects that qualify as HDDPs are eligible for incentives such as reduced setbacks, smaller lot sizes, and increased lot coverage and building heights. Density bonuses, based on the levels of green standards and affordable housing provided, are also part of the program. The highest density bonus — 2.5 times the base density — is allowed for projects that achieve specific green building certifications. In addition, the housing units must be no larger than 1,600 square feet in size and at least half

of the units must be affordable to low-income families. A 50-year affordability period applies to all affordable housing units developed under the HDDP ordinance.

The city is on the verge of approving its first formal HDDP application.

The Housing Resources Board (HRB), a nonprofit community land trust organization based on Bainbridge, is proposing to develop 48 sustainable, affordable housing units on a 6-acre parcel of land along Ferncliff Avenue within the Winslow area. The project, which will feature small housing footprints, cottage style homes, open space preservation, and low-impact site development strategies, is designed to meet the state's Evergreen Sustainable Development Criteria. The homes will have energy-efficient appliances, low-flow toilets, and other earth-friendly features.

According to Ken Balizer, HRB's executive director, the project will be structured as a community land trust. The nonprofit will sell or rent the units but hold the underlying land in trust for the community. Deed restrictions and long-term ground leases will ensure that the homes remain permanently affordable. Households earning no more than 120 percent of the area median income are eligible to purchase these limited equity homes. The first phase of construction is expected to begin this year, following final approval



Bainbridge Island is known for its natural beauty and for its residents' efforts to preserve its green spaces and small-town charm.
Photo by Ed Bob. Courtesy of Creative Commons.

of HDDP status. Six fourplex buildings are proposed. The first phase includes site clearing, a loop road, 24 one- and two-story homes, and infrastructure work. Mr. Balizer intends the project to showcase HDDP's usefulness and underscore the importance of its continuance.

In addition to the Ferncliff project, there are about six proposals currently undergoing preliminary review. City staff expects to approve more HDDP projects in 2011.

Bainbridge Island's housing demonstration program aims to identify changes in zoning and land use regulations that may be required to promote development of affordable and sustainable housing on the island. In less than two years, when the HDDP ordinance expires in August 2012, the city council will evaluate its success and consider making the program permanent.

For more information on the Bainbridge Island Housing Design Demonstration Project visit www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us. Information for this story came from Housing Resources Board and from www.buduser.org.



Governor Signs Foreclosure Mediation Bill

On April 14, Governor Christine Gregoire signed House Bill 1362, which will give indebted homeowners more time, more counseling and third-party mediation with their lenders before losing their homes in a move that makes Washington the third non-judicial foreclosure state in the nation to pass a foreclosure mediation law. The law goes into effect in July.

"I'm very proud," said Rep. Tina Orwall (D-33), the measure's primary sponsor. "It puts us out leading in the nation to help homeowners through this crisis."

The final bill was the result of negotiations between banks and anti-poverty advocates in the state, said state Housing Finance Commission Director Kim Herman, and it should to give lenders and homeowners more opportunities to reach agreements that keep Washington residents in their homes.

Under the new law, homeowners who fall behind on their mortgage payments will have 30 days from the time that they get an initial letter from their lenders to respond and ask for a period of time called "meet and confer." If they do, they'll get 60 days to talk with their lender and counselors before the lender can issue a notice of default, followed by a notice of trustee sale.

Any time between the first letter and the notice of trustee sale, a housing counselor or a lawyer can refer a homeowner to a new third-party mediation process. If they get that referral, borrowers will be able to have in-person negotiations with their lenders and a third-party mediator who will make sure both parties bring the right documents and attend when they're supposed to.

The new law lengthens the amount of time that homeowners who respond

to their lender's letter to trigger meet and confer will have before they can lose their houses. The law will also add housing counselors. Right now the state has just 45 counselors, but under the new law banks will pay a \$250 fee every time they foreclose on someone, providing enough money to double or triple that number.

For more information on this and other legislation visit apps.leg.wa.gov.

Mobile Home Park Protections Strengthened by Federal Court

A federal court decision in California could help people who live in mobile home parks in Washington. On Dec. 22, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of rent control on the Rancho Mobile Home Estates in Goleta, California. The court ruled against property owner Daniel Guggenheim, who protested the city's ability to continue the decades-old rent control on the property when the city incorporated in 2002.

Judge Andrew J. Kleinfeld wrote about the decision: "The Guggenheims bought a trailer park burdened by rent control, and had no concrete reason to believe they would get something much more valuable, because of hoped-for legal changes, than what they had. The people who really do have investment-backed expectations that might be upset by changes in the rent-control system are tenants who bought their mobile homes after rent control went into effect. Ending rent control would be a windfall to the Guggenheims, and a disaster for tenants."

In Washington state, owners of mobile home parks sued the city of Tumwater in federal court over a city law that makes it hard to sell mobile home parks and turn them into a more expensive housing development or a private golf course. The land owners in Tumwater asked the judge in their case to wait until the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided on the California case. The judge agreed.

Court papers say that the opinion in the California case could determine some questions of law in the Tumwater case.

Lisa Vatske resigns as HTF Managing Director

Lisa Vatske announced her resignation as Managing Director of the State Housing Trust Fund in January. During Lisa's tenure, the State reached an investment of \$800 million in the Housing Trust Fund, resulting in an affordable housing portfolio of over 1200 properties totaling 36,000 units, providing homes for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the State. Lisa provided leadership in the long-term sustainability and viability of HTF projects. She used a MacArthur Foundation grant to implement a state-wide coordinated public funders web-based annual reporting system, and to create tools for portfolio preservation planning. Housing Washington thanks her for her work and wishes her all the best for the future.

Contact Karma Shannon at the Dept. of Commerce for general information regarding the Housing Trust Fund. karma.shannon@commerce.wa.gov

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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“Every Heart Needs a Home” – Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day 2011

By Aaron Long

On a rainy, cold Valentine’s Day, more than 500 Washington residents converged on the state capitol in Olympia to rally in support of affordable housing during the annual Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day. Housing advocates, low-income people, homeless people, and concerned citizens gathered at the United Churches in Olympia to hear from community and elected leaders about pending housing legislation and how best to advocate with their state senators and representatives.

A warm welcome and orientation were given by Rachael Myers, Executive Director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, who served as emcee for the morning’s program.

State Rep. Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney was the first to speak to the assembled crowd, sharing her background of homelessness. Rep. Gutiérrez Kenney grew up in Washington in a family of migrant farm workers. She pointed out that agriculture was the second greatest economic driver in the state and that a significant percentage of its labor force was homeless. She said that from her perspective as a legislator, what it means to have advocacy groups come lobby her is that it shows that people care. If no one comes to see a representative about an issue then there is the tendency to think everything is fine.

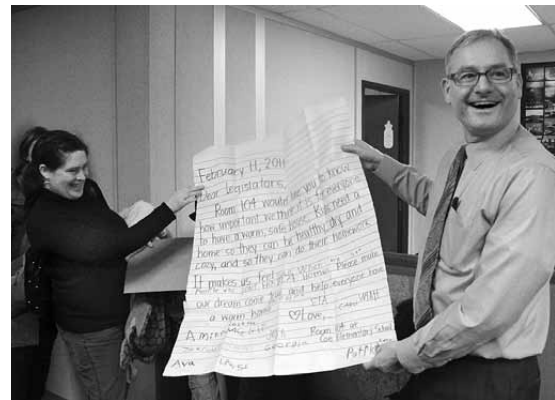
Her advice to people was to bring up what the legislature has already done for homeless as evidence of progress, and then to bring up what still needs to be done so as to emphasize the direct link between legislation and positive outcomes. She also recommended trying to influence every single legislator rather than just focusing on committee leaders, because the more legislative voices that speak up for an issue the better chance it has for success. She ended with a favorite saying of hers: “There are those who make it happen; there are those

who watch it happen; and there are those who wonder what happened.” She urged the assembled advocates to go and make it happen.

Following Rep. Gutiérrez Kenney’s inspiring speech, Tacoma Elementary School teacher Carol Ramm-Gramenz told of her school’s challenges teaching homeless students. McCarver Elementary has the highest turnover rate in the district on account of a high number of homeless families and an unacceptable level of violence arising from instability. In response, McCarver Elementary has established a partnership with the Tacoma Housing Authority to stabilize housing for its students. Two McCarver students who participate in the McCarver Peacemakers program, Kenday and Sandra, described their own successful efforts to advocate for their school and their community, providing a valuable lesson in the power of individual and group advocacy.

Lobbyists Nick Federici and Seth Dawson gave an overview of housing bills currently before the legislature. They enumerated the top legislative priorities of the session that advocates should ask their legislators to vote for: to fully fund the Housing Trust Fund; to remove the sunset provisions from and expand the scope of the document recording fees that fund the Home Security Fund and the Operation and Maintenance Fund; and to create portable tenant screening reports that would be both viewable and contestable by the tenant. Federici and Dawson declared that the advocates who come to Olympia are the experts on housing and homelessness issues and that the job of everyone present is to allow their knowledge, experience, and passion to sway the hearts and minds of their legislators.

Nancy Amidei, the beloved University of Washington School of Social Work Professor and grassroots



Advocates deliver a powerful message to Rep. Reuven Carlyle of the 36th Congressional District.

activist, explained that most lobbyists are focused on a very specific issue that affects a narrow interest, but that homelessness and housing issues affect everyone, which made this one of the most inclusive and emotionally powerful lobbies. She then led the crowd in a practical practice session for talking to legislators.

Galvanized, wearing the now traditional red scarves, and armed with pink and purple Valentine’s Day cards, the advocates assembled into groups by legislative district and then marched to the Capitol to meet with their senators and representatives.

Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day is a unique, annual opportunity for homeless people, housing professionals, non-profit leaders, and grass-roots and professional advocates to join together to remind their elected officials of the great strength that comes from a community determined to put an end to injustice.

Aaron Long works for the Low Income Housing Institute. Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day is sponsored by the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless. To learn more about these organizations, including the issues addressed by their respective agendas, visit www.wliha.org and www.endhomelessnesswa.org.

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Housing Washington is an annual conference on affordable housing featuring comprehensive forums for education & discussion, exhibitor showcase, and special events. Recognized as a leading regional resource, it annually attracts the largest number of people working within the affordable housing industry under one roof. At the Spokane Convention Center. *For more information and registration visit www.wshfc.org/conf.*

Rental Homes Remain Out of Reach

The national 2011 Housing Wage is \$18.46. This is the hourly wage that a full-time worker or household must earn on average to afford their local Fair Market Rent (FMR). On average, a minimum wage worker must work 102 hours a week, the equivalent to 2.5 full-time jobs, in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the FMR. *Contact NLIHC for the Out of Reach 2011 data. www.NLIHC.org*

Family Homelessness on Rise

The nation's homeless population increased 3% by 20,000 people between 2008 and 2009. The number of homeless families increased by 4%, or 3,200 households. The percentage of individuals living "doubled up" with friends or family for economic reasons rose 12%. *See [State of Homelessness in America](#), by William Sermons and Peter Witte at www.endhomelessness.org.*

Futureshack Residential Design Forum

This unique program explores and celebrates the richness of Puget Sound area residential design and puts it into a neighborhood context. In 2010 Futureshack included a highly successful event at Seattle Center. The event takes place on September 21, 2011; Call for Entries Opens April 13; Registration Deadline is June 1, 2011.

Equity Summit November 8 to 11 in Detroit

The PolicyLink Summit is back! Join thousands of your fellow advocates, activists, policymakers, foundation officials, and other equity leaders in Detroit this November. The theme of this year's summit is "Healthy Communities, Strong Regions, A Prosperous America." *More information and registration at equityblog.org.*