



NEWS UPDATE 03-09-2011

Housing Affordability Worsens for Working Renters → The National Housing Conference's research affiliate, the Center for Housing Policy, recently released "Housing Landscape 2011," a report that provides a comprehensive look at housing affordability trends for working households between 2008 and 2009. And the findings really highlight the problems that working low-income and moderate-income renter households face.

The report shows that housing affordability declined substantially for working renters nationwide. Nearly one-fourth of the nation's 22.7 million working renters, or 24.5 percent, had a severe housing cost burden in 2009 compared with 22.1 percent in 2008. Severe housing cost burden means these households spend more than half of their incomes on housing costs.

Of the renter households with severe housing cost burdens in 2009, 60 percent earned no more than 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), while 30 percent earned between 31 percent and 50 percent of the AMI, 9 percent earned between 51 percent and 80 percent of the AMI, and 1 percent earned between 81 percent and 100 percent of the AMI.

The report also found that working renter households saw a decline in the typical number of hours at work per week and in the median household income. From 2008 to 2009, the number of hours at work per week fell from 44 to 40. And the median income fell 5 percent to \$29,988 from 2008's \$31,570.

To top off the decrease in incomes, working rental households saw an increase in housing costs. The median gross rent, which includes the contract rent and utilities, increased 2.5 percent in 2009 to \$820.

Full Report: Housing Landscape 2011 <http://www.nhc.org/media/files/Landscape2011brieffinal.pdf>

Short-Term Continuing Resolution Passed to Fund Government → On March 2, President Barack Obama signed into law H.J. Res.44, a short-term continuing resolution for fiscal year (FY) 2011 funding, which extends government spending authority through March 18. Aside from reductions in earmarks, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding was not cut. [Read More about FY 2011 and 2012 Appropriations](#)

Federal Advocacy → **CDBG Funding Under Attack – Call to Action!**
<http://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/client/assets/files/02-25-2011%20NCDA%20WA%20Report.pdf>

Sound Alliance Campaign Victory → **Bank of America to Open First Assistance Center in Washington State for Distressed Homeowners** 03-03-2011

Thanks to the hard work and persistence of a broad cross-section of Sound Alliance leaders, we have secured a major victory in our foreclosure intervention campaign: **Bank of America this week in a letter to Sound Alliance announced that it will open its first-ever permanently staffed customer assistance center in Washington state** to assist financially distressed homeowners.

In the letter, a top executive at Bank of America said the establishment of the customer assistance center is in response to Sound Alliance and Washington State Treasurer Jim McIntire, who has been a firm ally in the Sound Alliance campaign. Leaders from **UA Local 32, IBEW Local 46, University Unitarian Church, the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia** and other member institutions have been central in bringing the foreclosure issue to light and spearheading the campaign to demand in-person, timely and meaningful assistance to troubled borrowers.

Located at 800 Fifth Avenue in downtown Seattle, the Bank of America customer assistance center is scheduled to be fully functioning by the end of March. Appointments can be made by calling **(206) 358-4338**. Sound Alliance has long called for a dedicated facility to assist people trying to avert loss of their homes. If properly operated, the center would provide borrowers with an opportunity to resolve problems through face-to-face meetings with their loan servicers rather than be diverted to call centers, where our members report long waits, multiple transfers, and inaccurate or misleading information—obstacles that can jeopardize their homes.

The Bank of America's written commitment comes on the heels of discussions with Sound Alliance and Treasurer McIntire, who both had criticized the bank for its inadequate response to the foreclosure crisis in the Puget Sound region. With your support, Sound Alliance leaders will continue to hold Bank of America accountable to ensure it follows through on this recent promise, and we also will monitor the effectiveness of the bank's customer service center.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Participate in the next Housing Team meeting on **Monday, March 14, 6:30 to 8 p.m.**, to keep moving the campaign forward. The meeting will be take place at UA Local 32, Seattle Area Pipe Trades, 595 Monster Road S.W., Renton.
- If you are a Bank of America borrower at risk of losing your home, call the bank's customer assistance center at **(206) 358-4338**. Please report your experiences, good or bad, with bank representatives by contacting Sound Alliance, info@soundorganizing.org, (206) 575-2252.

Peninsula, Gig Harbor homeless have faithful on their side → Peninsula Communities of Faith members know when to believe, and when not to. When the 2010 countywide census of homeless people counted six people in Gig Harbor and the Key Peninsula, they had zero faith in that number. When the 2011 count found 60 admittedly homeless people, they gave it more credence. They think there are hundreds of homeless men, women and children on what's often perceived as the affluent side of the Narrows.

Now the group is ready to do something about it. Members are developing an emergency shelter plan for homeless people and creating partnerships to move them into transitional, then permanent, homes.

Kathleen Merryman – The News Tribune – 03-05-2011

Read more: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/2011/03/05/v-printerfriendly/1570855/peninsula-gig-harbor-homeless.html#ixzz1G8uhwo16>

Funding → **Spring 2011 Notice of Funds Availability for the Pierce County 2060 Affordable Housing Program.** The application instructions and materials are posted on the website at: www.piercecountywa.gov/pc/abtus/ourorg/comsvcs/housing/shb_2060.htm

There will be an application workshop on Wednesday, March 30, 2011. The workshop will be held from 10am to noon in Conference Room A of the Pierce County Soundview building located at 3602 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98418. If you plan on applying for funding this spring we strongly encourage you to

attend this workshop. There have been a few changes to the applications for 2060 funds that will be discussed at the workshop. If you plan on attending the workshop please RSVP by responding to this email.

The workshop will include the 2163 homeless housing fund. The funding notices for 2163 will come at a later date. If you have questions regarding 2163 you can contact Rae Anne Giron at 253-798-6931 or rgiron@co.pierce.wa.us.

Funding → The VA is currently trying to expand its ability to provide emergency and interim housing to Veterans in the South Sound. There is limited funding available for the VA to contract with community providers who can provide emergency housing and support services.

“VHA VISN20 would like to alert all community partners in the region to the availability of VA contract funds to provide ***emergency transitional housing to homeless veterans***. In order for us to be successful in taking full advantage of this opportunity to enhance care to Veterans in our region, I am asking for your assistance in getting the word out about this to other agencies in your respective communities. It is very likely that the “anticipated service areas” listed in the notice will expand to include a greater portion of our region, so please do not limit your outreach in any way. We absolutely need to have agencies throughout the entire region who would be interested in such a contract identify themselves in order to move on in the next steps of the contracting process.

The link below is the “sources sought notice” which serves the purpose of determining the availability of potential businesses/agencies who have the capability to provide the services described in the “requirements”. Questions and feedback should be directed to the contracting officer listed in the notice. This notice will be posted until March 11th

<https://www.fbo.gov/notices/4528801d54a7728816705c9fcbc80529>

Foreclosure Prevention → Free workshop – March 10 – 2:30-4:30

Evergreen Tacoma, 1210 6th Av, Tacoma

more information: http://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/client/assets/files/03-10-2011%20Foreclosure-Workshop_Evergreen.jpg

Congratulations! → Rebuilding Together South Sound – Member of AHC
2011 Nonprofit Excellence Award: Jane T Russell Excellence in Governance

Housing-related Jobs on AHC website → <http://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/index.php/Jobs/>