



**NEWS UPDATE 03-09-2015**

## ➔ Affordable Housing Development in Pierce County – new opportunities

**Panel Discussion this week: March 11, 4 – 5:30 pm, 2550 South G Street, Multipurpose Room**

Join our panel discussion with Department of Commerce, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Pierce County Community Connections, City of Tacoma Housing Department, and Mercy Housing NW – to take a look at the current situation. Are there real opportunities? Yes, for these reasons:

- 1 – It is hoped that the Washington Housing Trust Fund “list” of projects will not occur in the 2015 legislative session. Instead, we trust that the awarding of HTF grants will return to the rigorous process previously conducted by the Department of Commerce.
- 2 – The 2015 State of Washington Housing Needs Assessment shows that the largest gap – between rent-burdened low-income households & available affordable housing of all counties in the state – is in Pierce County. This gap provides a strong rationale for developing more affordable housing in Pierce County.
- 3 – The allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits was reconfigured by the Washington Housing Financing Commission in 2013 so that like-sized counties compete only with each other for LIHTC funding. Pierce County is part of the Metro Region pool, which also includes Clark, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, and Whatcom counties. The Non-Metro [28] Counties and King County cannot compete in the Metro Pool’s 37% allocation of the total 9% Tax Credit funding in Washington – unless there are credits not used by the Metro Region.
- 4 – The Washington Housing Financing Commission also has more capacity than demand to award 4% LIHTC tax-exempt bonds to both nonprofit and for-profit developers that meet their criteria.

## ➔ WA State Legislative Session UPDATE

**News & legislative agenda from Washington Low Income Housing Alliance:**

Go to: WLIHA Bill Tracker for info on Lead & Support items Click ➔ <http://wliha.org/2015-bill-budget-tracker>

After March 11, committees will resume a regular meeting schedule, and attention will start turning to the upcoming budget release. This year, the House will be the first to go public with their budget proposals, with March 23 being the approximate date of release. In the meantime, policy bills that make it past the March 11 cutoff will need to be scheduled for a hearing in the opposite chamber. The committee chair gets to choose which bills they want to give a hearing to. If they want to stop a bill from progressing, they simply refuse to hear it by the next deadline on April 1 (seriously).

Last week’s progress is thanks to your extraordinary response to the call to action. Thank you for contacting your legislator and for pushing your networks to join you. It worked, and we will likely need you to do the same thing again in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to weigh in.

## ➔ Washington Housing Trust Fund

A 2015 capital investment will fund rental homes that will remain affordable for at least 40 years and will help low-income households become first-time homeowners. The vast majority of state investments in affordable homes assist people who are extremely low-income and are otherwise unable to afford a home. We are asking for \$100M dedicated to this important source of revenue for affordable housing.

## ➔ **Overriding Issues in Washington State**

From the Washington State Budget & Policy Center: reforming our failing tax system, addressing income inequality and working toward a better future, see following PowerPoints available on our [website](#):

- *Revenue Reforms: We Need to Build a Better Future for All Washingtonians*
- *Minimum Wage Updates 2014*
- *Advancing Racial Equity, Addressing Income Inequality & Climate Change in California*
- *Two Generations, One Future: Reigniting a Movement to End Poverty*

## ➔ **2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment** *A comprehensive review and forecast of affordable housing in our state.*

In 2014, the Affordable Housing Advisory Board and other partners launched the 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, the first effort in over 10 years to collect and analyze federal, state and housing authority data on affordable housing in our state.

**Note: Pierce County has largest gap between Rent-burdened Households & Affordable Housing in service**

### ➔ **Report documents:**

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/commissions/AffordableHousingAdvisoryBoard/Affordable-Housing-Needs-Study/Pages/default.aspx>

## ➔ **Mental Health: State needs to prioritize funding**

click: <http://blog.thenewstribune.com/letters/2015/03/05/state-needs-to-prioritize-mental-health-funding/>

## ➔ **EVENTS**

### **Free Foreclosure Legal Clinic**

**Saturday, March 14, 1 – 3 pm**

**First United Methodist Church, 621 Tacoma Ave South, Tacoma sign up ➔ 253.572.5134**

### **PCAF Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening**

**Wednesday March 18: 5:30 – 7:30 pm**

**3009 South 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma 98409**

### **25th Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness**

**May 13 and 14, 2015 Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center**

The 2015 conference will bring over 600 homelessness providers and advocates from across the state to exchange innovative ideas, best practices, and grow the movement to end homelessness in Washington.

Program and early bird registration online at [www.wliha.org](http://www.wliha.org) March 16.