



Housing Washington

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Section 8 Voucher Funding and Reform

By Joshua Okrent

On February 13, President Obama released the fiscal year 2013 Budget Proposal. The new budget proposed \$19.07 billion for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, which is \$160 million above the FY 2012 enacted level and includes:

- **\$75 million** for an estimated 11,538 new HUD-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for homeless veterans, which matches the FY 2012 funding level; and
- **\$111 million** for Section 811 voucher renewals.

The Budget Proposal included **\$8.7 billion** for Project-Based Rental Assistance, which is **\$640 million** below the FY 2012 enacted level. **Housing advocates across the country are very concerned with this proposed reduction.** Congress is currently in the process of holding hearings and assessing the President's Budget Proposal as they begin their own appropriations process.

The President's Budget Proposal also assumes savings from a number of reforms to the Section 8 program, including an increase in the minimum rent from the current ceiling of \$50 to a set amount of \$75 for all non-Moving to Work Public Housing Agencies. (All Moving to Work PHAs would continue to have authority to set minimum rents at whatever level they choose.) The proposed minimum rent of \$75 would also apply to the Project-Based Rental Assistance account. This would be the first substantial reform of the Housing Choice Voucher program in ten years. For previously homeless and low income



Forest Creek Apartments in Spokane is an example of Project-based Section-8 housing. Photo courtesy of Forest Creek Apartments.

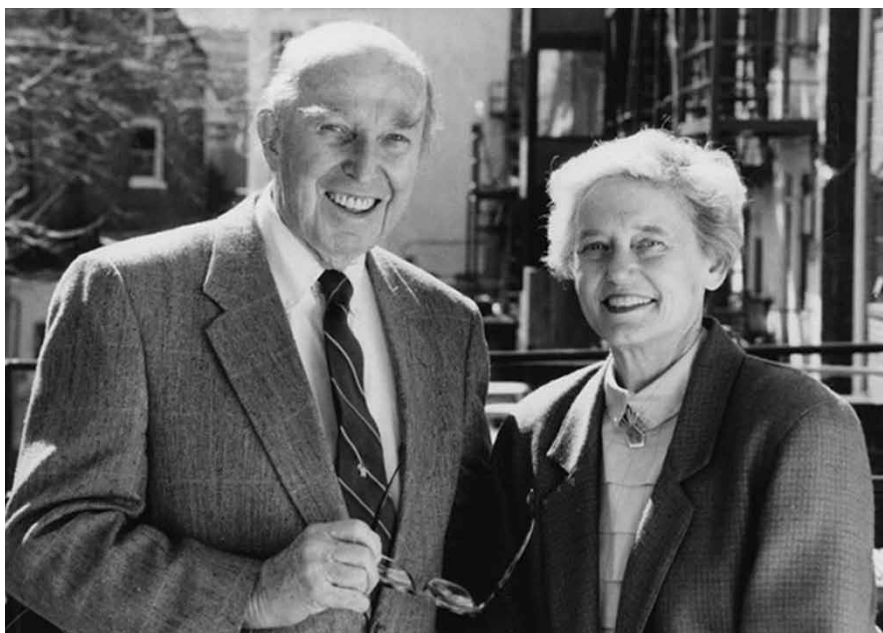
individuals, this rent increase would create an extreme hardship.

Efforts are currently underway in the House to move forward with various reforms of the Section 8 program. In October 2011 the House Housing Financial Services Subcommittee on Insurance, Housing and Community Opportunity held a hearing entitled "The Section 8 Savings Act of 2011: Proposals to Promote Economic Independence for Assisted Families." The hearing accompanied the release of the second draft of the Section 8 Savings Act (SESA), which includes many changes from previous efforts begun by the 111th Congress.

The Section 8 program provides rental assistance for low-income households, with 75 percent of funds being targeted at households living at or below 30 percent of area median income (AMI). Section 8 tenant-based assistance follows participating individuals and families, regardless of whether or not they move over the course of their subsidy. Participants in the program pay 30 percent of their incomes toward housing costs, with the program paying the remainder up to a set maximum amount. These vouchers are the

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Patty Rouse, Housing Visionary and Co-Founder of Enterprise, Passes Away at 85



Patty Rouse and James Rouse founded Enterprise Foundation in 1982, setting up a nonprofit that focused on building affordable homes for low-income families. Photo courtesy of Enterprise.

Patricia “Patty” Traugott Rouse, died on Monday, March 5, according to officials at Enterprise Community Partners, the organization she and James Rouse started three decades ago.

She was raised in Norfolk, Va., graduated from that Sweet Briar College in 1948 with a degree in British history, and was working toward a graduate degree in urban studies at Old Dominion University when she met James Rouse.

That was 1973, six years after the founding of his planned community. She soon left school, married Rouse and moved to Columbia. Those who knew her in the decades after that recalled her continued dedication, both in her commitment to the community and her support for the arts. Patricia and James Rouse founded what was then called The Enterprise Foundation in 1982, setting up a nonprofit

that focused on building affordable homes for low-income families.

Patricia Rouse was a vice president, secretary and lifetime member of Enterprise’s board of trustees, and had also served as a secretary and member of the board of directors for its for-profit subsidiary, Enterprise Community Investment Inc. She was involved with numerous local and national boards, committees and organizations.

Terri Ludwig, Enterprise’s president and CEO, noted in a statement that it has been 30 years since the foundation’s founding. “We are forever indebted to Patty, our visionary co-founder, for her unwavering commitment and the groundbreaking legacy she has left the affordable housing and community development industry,” Ludwig said.

“Patty’s inspiration and generosity touched the lives of so many in the

affordable housing and community development industry,” wrote Enterprise in a recent statement. “The genuine care and compassion she exuded for the individuals and families served by the organization created a standard that Enterprise strives to uphold today.”

Contributions can be made to The Patty Rouse Fund, c/o Enterprise Community Partners Inc., 10227 Wincopin Circle, American City Building, Suite 500, Columbia, MD, 21044.

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Washington Special Legislative Session Begins

By Joshua Okrent

A special session of the Washington Legislature started in early May as Democratic and Republican leaders begin budget negotiations and try to come to an agreement over the supplemental budget.

The 2012 regular session achieved a number of important goals, including passage of the document recording fee bill which bring resources to prevent homelessness to every community in the state; the passage of the Fair Tenant Screening Act; and the preservation of the Housing and Essential Needs program in both the House and Senate majority party budgets. Additionally, a historic gay-marriage bill was passed and signed into law.

However, lawmakers are still looking to close a budget gap of about \$500 million through the end of the two-year budget cycle, ending June 2013. They also hope to leave several hundred million dollars in reserves. Lawmakers couldn't agree on a supplemental budget plan before the regular 60-day legislative session ended on March 8.

The Democrats, who hold numerical majorities in the House and Senate, have drawn the line against further cuts to K-12 education programs and they are labeling one Republican budget move – skipping a pension payment in the state's most under-funded plans to save \$130 million or more – a gimmick.

What happens next has big implications for affordable housing and homelessness. The Capital Budget/ Jobs Package and the Housing Trust Fund allocation are yet to be resolved. And the future of the Housing and Essential Needs program hangs on the line.

Keep track of the ongoing budget negotiations at the website of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, www.wliha.org

Section 8 Voucher Reform

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leading form of low-income housing assistance, serving over two million households, including families with children, elderly households, and people with disabilities.

There has been an ongoing attempt to reform the Housing Choice Voucher program in this and previous congresses. The previous effort, known as the Section 8 Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA) would streamline the Housing Choice Voucher program and permanently address a formula problem that led to the loss of 150,000 vouchers over three years. Under SEVRA, funding for vouchers would be based on each public housing agency's actual spending for vouchers in the previous year. Any public housing agencies with large unspent balances would have some of their reserves reallocated to agencies that could immediately assist families on their waiting lists. If a public housing agency faced a shortfall, it could temporarily borrow from the following year's allotment. The bill would also reform the financing of "portability" moves, so that families could more easily exercise their right to move with a voucher and agencies could save burdensome paperwork and avoid cash-flow problems.

The reform model proposed by the current Congress, SESA, incorporates many of the changes proposed by the December, 2010 version of SEVRA, but has some unique aspects as well. Like SEVRA, SESA extends project-based voucher contracts for an additional five years, up to a maximum of 20 years; however, SESA does not make any additional changes to budget authorities or areas that can be authorized for project-based vouchers.

Reform of the Housing Choice Voucher program for the first time in ten years will help the program continue to provide affordable housing to millions of households, while using federal resources more efficiently.

For in-depth analysis of the SEVRA and SESA proposals, please visit www.endhomelessness.org.

IN THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, PRESIDENT OBAMA PROPOSES NEARLY \$3 BILLION FOR CDBG AND \$1 BILLION FOR THE HOME PROGRAM. THAT'S LEVEL FUNDING COMPARED TO FY 2012, BUT IT MAINTAINS THE STEEP CUTS – 12 PERCENT FOR CDBG AND 38 PERCENT FOR HOME – APPROVED BY LAWMAKERS LAST YEAR. HOUSING ADVOCATES SHOULD CONTACT THEIR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES NOW TO RESTORE FULL FUNDING TO THESE PROGRAMS AND OPPOSE THE CUTS IN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.

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King County's One Night Count of Homeless People up Slightly

By Nicole Macri

The 32nd annual One Night Count of homeless people in King County took place in the early hours of Friday, January 27. 800 volunteers fanned out across the county to count the number of men, women and children who are homeless and without shelter tonight. They counted people trying to survive in cars, tents, all night buses, select hospitals, or curled up in blankets under bridges or in doorways.

Findings

- 2,594 men, women and children had no shelter in King County, a small increase over those found without shelter last year.
- 800 volunteers counted people in 13 cities across King County.

Why does the Count take place?

The primary purpose of the One Night Count is to document how many people still lack basic shelter. The results are impossible to misinterpret: several



2,594 men, women and children had no shelter in King County on the night of January 27. Photo by Chris Brown. Courtesy of SKKCH

their neighbors sleeping on cardboard or riding buses to keep warm, they are shocked and saddened. We want them to be inspired to urge their local and state officials to address these needs with resources.”

This count focuses on people surviving outside without shelter; it does not include those who are staying in shelters and transitional housing. A full report that also includes the number of people in shelters and transitional housing will be released shortly. Last year, volunteers found 2,442 people surviving outside, without shelter, and another 6,382 in shelters and transitional housing programs.

Organizers recognize that this morning's count is an undercount of people without shelter on this night. Counters can reach only a portion of the geographic area of the county, and many homeless people sleep in hard-to-reach places.

Bill Block, Director of the Committee to End Homeless, which implements the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County, said,

“The street count is only a snapshot, which can be influenced by a number of factors. We know without our prevention and housing programs, thousands more people would be on the streets. Even in the face of the recession, we know that our investments can reduce the number of people who are homeless – that happened last year and the year before.”

Our community continues to be committed to finding solutions to homelessness. This effort, supported by governments, faith communities, non-profits, businesses, homeless and formerly homeless people, has helped to develop over 4,000 housing units, with an additional 800 in the pipeline. The outpouring of volunteers participating reflects a strong and growing community resolved to end homelessness.

Nicole Macri is Director of Administrative Services at the Downtown Emergency Services Center in Seattle. For more information about the One Night Count please contact Alison Eisinger at alison@homelessnessinfo.org.

“WHEN HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE SEE THEIR NEIGHBORS SLEEPING ON CARDBOARD OR RIDING BUSES TO KEEP WARM, THEY ARE SHOCKED AND SADDENED. WE WANT THEM TO BE INSPIRED TO URGE THEIR LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS TO ADDRESS THESE NEEDS WITH RESOURCES.”

– ALISON EISINGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SEATTLE/KING COUNTY COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

thousand men, women, and children lack safety and stability. Alison Eisinger, organizer of the Count and the Executive Director of the Seattle – King County Coalition on Homelessness, says, “There's another reason for the Count. When hundreds of people see

The One Night Count: A First-time Volunteer Perspective

By Josephine Kingman

When my alarm goes off at 1:00 am it takes a moment to remember why, and a little longer to pull the covers back. I stumble out of bed and pull on layers of wool and fleece, because after all it's January in Seattle. I brew a cup of green tea in my thermos. Flashlight, extra batteries, gloves, hat...check. My dog eyes me warily from the couch as I walk out the door.

the multitude of volunteers in the room. Tally sheets are passed around, detailed instructions are given, and the room begins to empty.

My team is responsible for a large section of Ballard, which is where I live, so I am familiar with the territory. Somehow everything looks different at night though. We walk slowly, taking in hushed voices, scanning the sidewalks and doorways. The biggest

are brief – sometimes I hand out change, but more often I look away. I don't often reflect on what I am witnessing. Tonight is different. Tonight I do not look away but look intently. Tonight I think about the lives, stories, routines, safety, and health of the people that we mark as numbers. I volunteered for the One Night Count because I believe it is important to cultivate awareness of homelessness in my community. I know that the results of the count can make a difference in city and county policy and planning. On a deeper level, I also believe that I have a responsibility, as a person who has a home, to spend a few slightly uncomfortable and cold hours documenting the reality of those who don't.

Driving home after the count, with Seattle waking up around me, I am grateful for the experience. I am reminded of a cardboard sign that I saw someone holding on the street once. It said "We all live out here." I think that today I understand those words a little better. If only one person in Seattle is homeless, we all share the experience – and the responsibility – as a community.

When the time comes next year, I'll sign up to do the count again. But there are 365 days between now and then, and each day is an opportunity to work for change. Perhaps I will sign up for an advocacy workshop, write a letter, or take a few minutes to call my senator. Some days it could be as simple as giving someone a smile, and not looking away.

Josephine Kingman is Executive Assistant at the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information on getting involved with the 2013 One Night Count, visit the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness at <http://homelessinfo.org>.



"I volunteered for the One Night Count because I believe it is important to cultivate awareness of homelessness in my community... On a deeper level, I also believe that I have a responsibility, as a person who has a home, to spend a few hours documenting the reality of those who don't."

Photo by Chris Brown. Courtesy of SKKCH

The energy in the air at the Compass Center is tangible. Hundreds of volunteers are packed into a large room. I instantly shed several layers of clothing and scan the room for my team leader. I am fully awake now and edgy with apprehension. It's exciting to be in downtown Seattle in the middle of the night, but I am grounded by the seriousness of the task at hand. My team leader is amazingly organized, which inspires a certain amount of confidence. In fact, the entire event is incredibly well organized, especially considering

challenge is identifying people who are sleeping in vehicles. We look for foggy windows, and cars that appear to be packed full of belongings. The initial anxiety wears off, and the experience becomes strangely meditative. I am intensely aware of my surroundings in the dense quiet of the night. When we mark down a van that appears to be occupied, I wonder about the person inside. What is their story? Will they get up in the morning and go to work? Are there children sleeping in there?

Working in Belltown, I see homeless people every day. Our interactions

Fewer Environmental Impacts in Building Reuse

A report by Preservation Green Lab of the National Trust for Historic Preservation finds that building reuse almost always yields fewer environmental impacts than new construction when comparing buildings of similar size and functionality.

The study concludes that building reuse almost always offers environmental savings over demolition and new construction. Moreover, it can take between 10 and 80 years for a new,

and human health impacts associated with products and services throughout their respective life cycles. This study examines indicators within four environmental impact categories, including climate change, human health, ecosystem quality, and resource depletion. It tests six different building typologies, including a single-family home, multifamily building, commercial office, urban village mixed-use building, elementary school, and warehouse conversion. The study evaluates these building types across four U.S. cities, each representing a different climate zone, i.e., Portland, Phoenix, Chicago, and Atlanta.

The range of environmental savings from building reuse varies widely, based on building type, location, and assumed level of energy efficiency. Savings from reuse are between 4 and 46 percent over new construction when comparing buildings with the same energy performance level. The warehouse-to-

quantity and type of materials used in a building renovation can reduce, or even negate the benefits of reuse. In general, renovation projects that require many new materials – for example, an addition to an elementary school or the conversion of a warehouse to a residential or office use – offer less significant environmental benefits than scenarios in which the footprints or uses of the buildings remain unchanged. In the case of the warehouse-to-multifamily conversion scenario, the newly constructed building actually demonstrated fewer environmental impacts in the categories of ecosystem quality and human health.

Although warehouse conversions and school additions require more material inputs than other types of renovation projects, reusing these buildings is still more environmentally responsible – in terms of climate change and resource impacts – than building anew, particularly when these buildings are retrofitted to perform at advanced efficiency levels. Better tools are needed to aid designers in selecting materials with the least environmental impacts. Such resources would benefit new construction and renovation projects alike.

The study concludes that for those concerned with climate change and other environmental impacts, reusing an existing building and upgrading it to maximum efficiency is almost always the best option regardless of building type and climate. Most climate scientists agree that action in the immediate timeframe is crucial to stave off the worst impacts of climate change. Reusing existing buildings can offer an important means of avoiding unnecessary carbon outlays and help communities achieve their carbon reduction goals in the near term.

For more information and to read the entire report, visit www.preservationnation.org



Preserving old buildings, such as the recently refurbished Melrose Market in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, provides greater green benefits over demolition and new construction. Photo by Kevin Keim, courtesy of Dunn + Hobbes.

energy-efficient building to overcome, through more efficient operations, the negative climate change impacts that were created during the construction process. However, care must be taken in the selection of construction materials in order to minimize environmental impacts; the benefits of reuse can be reduced or negated based on the type and quantity of materials selected for a reuse project.

Utilizing a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) methodology, the study compares the relative environmental impacts of building reuse and renovation versus new construction over the course of a 75-year life span. LCA is an internationally recognized approach to evaluating the potential environmental

multifamily conversion – one of the six typologies selected for study – is an exception: it generates a 1 to 6 percent greater environmental impact relative to new construction in the ecosystem quality and human health impact categories, respectively.

It is often assumed that the CO₂ reduction benefits gained by a new, energy efficient building outweigh any negative climate change impacts associated with the construction of that building. This study finds that the reuse of buildings with an average level of energy performance consistently offers immediate climate-change impact reductions compared to more energy-efficient new construction.

Materials matter, however: the

Green Operation and Maintenance Certification Program

By John Syverson

A pilot certification program developed by Enterprise Community Partners was held in January and February at Seattle Central Community College. The course was designed to assist maintenance, property management, and portfolio management staff understand and implement the intent of green/sustainable features that have been incorporated into new construction. The two week course provided training to staff at the individual building level. It also aimed at teaching how to use sustainable strategies for maintaining existing structures.

Attendees included representatives from the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), Seattle Housing Authority, Common Ground, Mercy Housing, Mt. Baker Housing Association, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda), Multi-Service Center, Community Psychiatric Clinic, Pioneer Human Services, Bellwether, and Compass Housing Alliance.

Enterprise launched their Green Communities initiative in 2004, with a mission of supporting the creation and preservation of green affordable homes across the country. As part of that strategy, enterprise has committed to training thousands of housing professionals in green development, asset management, maintenance and operations.

According to Enterprise, green operations simply make sense, and green asset management is a powerful tool for improving housing performance. There is still a popular perception in the world of housing maintenance that describes green management as a burdensome process that is not worth the time or costs. The true story is just the opposite—a

green approach to construction and asset management means that operating costs go down, environmental hazards are reduced, resident utility savings improve, and potential residents are drawn to the attractiveness of a healthy, green living environment.

A major focus of the certification program was the way in which maintenance is handled. Going green means instituting maintenance practices that work best over the long term. No matter how a property was originally designed and constructed, its performance can be significantly improved when ongoing maintenance is carried out with health, sustainability and efficiency in mind.

The main areas for enhancing performance are:

- Reducing energy and water consumption
- Lowering greenhouse gas emissions
- Improving indoor air quality
- Lengthening the lifespan of equipment and systems

The goals for the program are:

- Increase comfort
- Increase indoor health
- Increase safety
- Increase efficiency
- Improve durability
- Reduce maintenance
- Save money

The Seattle course instructors were Alexandra Ramsdew, director of sustainability at Rushing Co and Tien Peng, senior director of sustainability codes and standards at NRMCA. Joining them were guest speakers Nathan Miller, energy engineer and Craig Gagner, director of commissioning at Rushing Co. The speakers emphasized the need to maximize building operations, mechanical systems and preventative maintenance procedures. They also provided tools for energy and water conservation, waste management, integrated pest management, recycling, and strategies to promote healthier living environments.

The program allowed time for classroom discussion so that housing providers could share the experiences



Denny Park Apartments, owned and operated by the Low Income Housing Institute, is an example of affordable housing sustainably built and maintained. Photo courtesy of LIHI.

they learned. Workshops produced many questions and answers with a number of creative approaches to solutions to the operations and maintenance of their facilities.

The classroom conversation resulted in six quick steps that can make a big impact:

1. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs or low emitting diodes (LED), and add motion sensors on common space and exterior lighting.
2. Add demand controls to the hot water recirculation loop, insulate all exposed hot water piping, and turn down water heater/boiler thermostats to the minimum temperature.
3. Upgrade laundry equipment, refrigerators, and dishwashers to ENERGY STAR appliances.
4. Repair leaks and install sink aerators, low-flow shower heads, and toilet tank flappers to reduce the amount of water used.
5. Repair and aim sprinklers to deliver water only to where it is needed.
6. Encourage and facilitate recycling.

John Syverson is Facilities Manager at the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information about Enterprise Green Communities, including the Green Operation and Maintenance Certification Program, please visit www.enterprisecommunity.com.

A Unique New Jersey Collaboration Increases Energy Efficiency in Multifamily Homes

By Elaine Bryant and Susan Lacey Ringhof

In 2010, the Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) of New Jersey embarked on an innovative collaboration with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) to increase energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions of residential multifamily housing developments and provide multifamily building owners with financing and grant incentives to cover the cost of energy efficiency installations.

PSE&G provides power to nearly three quarters of New Jersey's population in a 2,600-square-mile service area. NJHMFA manages in excess of 500 multifamily projects. Under the Program, multifamily building owners can receive an on-site investment grade energy audit of their buildings at no cost. The energy efficiency measures recommended by the audit may include lighting, HVAC, humidification, building envelope, windows, doors, motors, and other energy-consuming equipment. PSE&G then provides incentives to help pay for the cost of installing the energy efficiency measures, and building owners repay their share of the cost over a ten-year period, interest free, on their energy bill. All energy efficiency measures identified by the audit as having a simple payback of fifteen years or less are eligible for installation.

The Collaborative

The collaboration between PSE&G and NJHMFA grew from a round-table discussion between the New Jersey Governor's staff, regulators, NJHMFA, and PSE&G to address the unique needs of multifamily affordable housing projects.

NJHMFA's primary goal in addressing energy efficiency opportunities in their financing portfolio was to relieve the continuous upward pressure on rental rates by reducing the operating costs associated with the housing projects. The

run-up in energy prices, followed by the recession, had forced building owners to defer basic maintenance in order to mitigate rental rate increases. In addition to lowering operating costs, NJHMFA wanted to ensure that addressing energy efficiency opportunities did not increase owner debt.

During the planning stage, NJHMFA had identified 75 master metered affordable housing developments in PSE&G's service territory. These ranged from garden apartments to high rises and contained over 12,000 individual rental units. After NJHMFA completed their analysis of this portfolio they recommended that 36 of those projects be initially targeted by the PSE&G program.

Assessing the Marketplace

PSE&G's service territory includes many of New Jersey's urban areas and has a high proportion of multifamily housing units. These buildings typically face thin operating margins and constrained ability to increase rents, which leads to deferred maintenance, poor building conditions, ongoing deterioration, and energy inefficiency which in turn further erodes operating margins and the ability to retrofit an inefficient building.

PSE&G's Multifamily Housing Program was designed to address market barriers and obstacles which often prevent or impede affordable multifamily housing from taking advantage of energy efficiency programs. Although there is significant opportunity for energy efficiency retrofits and energy savings in this building stock, this market sector consistently has been overlooked and underserved by existing energy efficiency programs. Most energy efficiency programs in the State over the last 10-20 years have been targeted to single family residences and commercial buildings.

The affordable housing multifamily

sector was targeted because of its relatively high energy usage, aging mechanical equipment, the facilities' general lack of available capital for infrastructure improvements, and the need to preserve the affordability of these buildings and



Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) and New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) collaborated in order to deliver energy efficiency improvements to low-income customers. Photo courtesy of PSE&G.

the housing they provide. It was also an opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of an innovative partnership between the utility and a State agency. Preserving and improving existing affordable housing is an essential step in addressing the State's affordable housing needs while also promoting sustainability and sound land use planning.

The multifamily housing market segment often has older, deteriorated facilities, limited cash flow, and lacks capital for infrastructure improvements. These buildings typically face thin operating margins and constrained ability to increase rents which leads to deferred maintenance, poor building conditions, ongoing deterioration, and energy inefficiency which in turn further erodes operating margins and the ability to retrofit an inefficient building. This program was designed to overcome these barriers and to make

continued on next page

energy efficiency upgrades available and affordable for this market sector.

Typically, the multifamily affordable housing sector is overlooked by traditional energy efficiency programs due to a lack of access to the properties and their owners and the perception, often correctly so, that this sector lacks the capital to make energy investment upgrades. PSE&G's Multifamily Housing Program addresses this market barrier in two ways: first, its partnership with NJHMFA allows the program to easily identify and target eligible multifamily facilities, and second, providing an Investment Grade Audit at no cost to the customer allows the building owner to understand the opportunity to improve their building's operation and cash flow.

PSE&G's Multifamily Housing Program was received with great interest by the target market and became fully subscribed very quickly after program launch. A total of 128 NJHMFA financed projects were targeted for program recruitment. As of the end of the third quarter of 2010, approximately 60 project applications had been received.

The Multifamily Housing program addresses various building types, from single story to high rise. Generally, the low-rise projects benefit from improvements to the thermal envelope; more insulation, better air sealing of exterior walls, floors and ceilings. Mid and high-rise buildings have a much smaller proportion of exterior "skin" to attack, so improvements to insulation packages are difficult or impossible to achieve. Because of the nature of the building stock, improvements are more focused on mechanical systems. The program always considers the feasibility of the replacement of boilers and chillers, but those replacements are not necessarily always cost effective on their own and if included in a project must be balanced with low cost measures to ensure that the project as a whole meets cost effectiveness requirements. However, improvements to the existing equipment are almost always worth considering,

especially variable frequency drives for motors and pumps.

In low-rise buildings, there are fewer common areas and correspondingly fewer opportunities for lighting improvements. In mid and high-rise buildings there are ample opportunities to replace common area lights (especially hallways and stairwells) with either higher efficiency fluorescents bulbs and ballasts or light-emitting diode (LED) lights, including LED tube lights that can replace fluorescent bulbs within existing fixtures.

Ventilation issues are the most complex issues in multi-story buildings. In some instances, buildings are over-ventilated and waste energy by discharging conditioned air beyond what is necessary for a healthy environment. In other instances, buildings are under-ventilated and improvements to the systems that would make for a



The study found that low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators are inexpensive and low-tech methods to save hot water and energy, and have a quick pay-back period.

healthier indoor environment require additional energy consumption. Almost all of the buildings need improvements in balancing the ventilation system from one apartment to another and from one floor to another. Constant airflow regulators (CARs) are typically recommended to adjust the exhaust rate in individual apartments to balance the ventilation for the overall building. The program has also found great opportunity to save energy by recommending the installation of energy recovery ventilators (ERVs), which capture exhausted conditioned air and pass it through a heat exchanger, which minimizes the energy needed

to condition air that is supplied to common areas of the building.

While the program is not designed to save water, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators save hot water and, thus, energy. These recommendations are inexpensive, low-tech and always have a quick payback period. Aside from the value of the funding itself, the audit process is important for helping to prioritize the needs of the projects and clarifies the cost effectiveness of each measure that is considered.

The collaborative approach to the design and implementation of PSE&G's Multifamily Housing Program has proved to be a success for all program stakeholders, as well as an overall model for energy efficiency program design. The partnership with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency in the design and development of the program proved to be a critical path to buy-in from State regulators leading to program funding. In addition, program recruitment was simplified and expedited by the use of NJHMFA housing data and building owner contact information and NJHMFA's program endorsement. While in-depth program evaluation will need to take place to accurately assess the benefits derived from participation in PSE&G's program, it is anticipated that the owner's share of the cost of the energy efficiency upgrades should be significantly offset by the cost-savings recognized as a direct result of those energy efficiency upgrades.

The PSE&G/NJHMFA collaboration to develop and deliver a successful program to a customer segment often financially unable to undertake energy efficiency improvements is both unique and compelling and has proven to be an innovative, effective approach to reaching this customer segment.

Elaine Bryant and Susan Lacey Ringhof are employees of PSE&G in, Newark, New Jersey. This article is edited from the complete report, available at European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy at www.eceee.org.

Poll Reveals Overwhelming Public Support for Food Stamps

by Jennifer Adach

A poll released on January 19 shows that by an overwhelming margin, American voters oppose cutting food stamp assistance as a way to reduce government spending. Over three-quarters (77%) of voters say this is the wrong way to reduce spending and only 15% favor cutting such assistance.

- The opposition to cutting food stamps crossed party lines: 92% of Democrats, 74% of Independents, and 63% of Republicans say this is the wrong way to reduce spending.
- Only 9% of those polled said they would be more likely to support a candidate who favors cutting funds for the food stamp program; half said they would be less likely.
- Opposition to food stamp cuts is even more overwhelming than in polling data released in November 2010, when 71% said it was the wrong way to cut spending.

Voters are broadly concerned about the nation's hunger problem: 81% say that low-income families and children not being able to afford enough food to eat is a serious problem.

The poll of 1,013 registered voters was conducted by Hart Research Associates from January 11-17,

2012. Support for ending hunger and protecting food stamps was high across party lines, age, race, gender, income, and geographical areas.

Food stamp benefits currently go to one in seven Americans, a historically high participation rate that is largely attributable to a poor economy

and the added millions of working families struggling with hunger. The Food Research and Action Center commissioned this poll to measure support for anti-hunger measures generally and for food stamps in particular, at a time when Congress is returning for a new session, and when some state policymakers

(e.g., in Michigan and Pennsylvania), some conservatives in Congress, and some political leaders have launched attacks on the program. The poll shows that a majority of Americans believe that the Food Stamp Program, renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2008, is very important to the country, and strongly believe that the federal government should have a major role in the effort to provide low-income people with the food and nutrition they need.

“What this poll tells us is that, despite rhetoric and false claims about the program, Americans across the country see food stamps as a program that works and that is making a real difference for people,” said FRAC President Jim Weill. “We urge all national and state



Seventy-seven percent of American voters say that cutting food stamps is the wrong way to reduce spending. Photo by Pikaluk. Courtesy of Creative Commons.

“...DESPITE RHETORIC AND FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, AMERICANS ACROSS THE COUNTRY SEE FOOD STAMPS AS A PROGRAM THAT WORKS AND THAT IS MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE.”

– JIM WEILL, FRAC PRESIDENT

policymakers to recognize SNAP's strengths as an essential support for Americans. With high rates of hunger, poverty, and unemployment, SNAP is helping millions of families put food on the table. American voters won't tolerate hunger in our midst, and across party lines they support this valuable program.”

Jennifer Adach is Communications Coordinator at Food Research and Action Center (FRAC.) For more information please visit www.frac.org.

HOUSING BRIEFS

Reichert Cosponsors Tax Credit Bill

The bills introduced by the ad hoc A.C.T.I.O.N. coalition (A Call To Invest in Our Neighborhoods) continue to gain bipartisan support in the Federal House and Senate. On March 1, Republican House Ways and Means Committee member Dave Reichert of Washington's 8th congressional district joined Democrats and cosponsored H.R. 3661. The A.C.T.I.O.N. coalition focuses on strengthening the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program and ensuring that low-income working families throughout the nation have access to decent, safe, affordable rental housing.

Organizations working in Washington state had sent a group sign-on letter in December 2011 asking Congressman Reichert to cosponsor the legislation. The letters signers include many organizations dedicated to the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Washington state, such as the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle – King County, the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Mercy Housing Northwest, the Low Income Housing Institute, and many others.

As the 112th Congress considers tax reform and deficit reduction solutions, the campaign has reconvened to revise its strategy in light of the changed political and fiscal environment. Moving forward, A.C.T.I.O.N. will focus on: protecting and preserving the Housing Credit in whatever deficit reduction or tax reform plan Congress considers, and enacting national consensus proposals to sustain the program's effectiveness and efficiency in solving the nation's affordable rental housing challenges.

For more about the Affordable Housing A.C.T.I.O.N. campaign visit www.rentalhousingaction.org.

Foreclosure Fairness 'Fix' Passes

In July 2011, Washington state became the third state in the country with a program designed to help homeowners find a resolution to foreclosure proceedings with their lender or servicer.

In early March of 2012, The Foreclosure Fairness Act 'fix' bill (HB 2614/SB 6364) passed the legislature and is currently headed to Governor Gregoire's desk for her signature. If passed into law, this bill will streamline the mediation process, possibly doubling the number of mediations and thereby helping more Washington homeowners keep their homes. Rep. Tina Orwall (D-33) provided leadership on this bill.

Since the adoption of the Foreclosure Fairness Act in 2011, changes were necessary in order to affect the legislative intent behind the Act. During the December 2011 Special Session, SSB 5988 was adopted in order to deal with mediator immunity issues that had occurred immediately after passage of the Act. During the recent regular session HB 2421, providing permanent changes, was passed and is expected to be signed into law.

For more information please visit <http://apps.leg.wa.gov>.

Safe Parking Program Opens in Ballard

In March, Our Redeemers Lutheran Church in Ballard became the first church to host Seattle's pilot 'Safe Parking Program.' The new program is aimed at providing safe overnight parking for people living in their cars. The church has specified eight parking spaces in their private lot and is offering a permitting process and 'safe parking' tags that permitted cars can hang from their rearview mirrors. The Seattle City Council approved the program as part of the City's 2012 budget, which includes \$20,000 for the program. That money, along with \$10,000 from the State will be used for a caseworker to screen applicants, put them in touch with services and help them move into permanent housing. The campers are limited to a three-month stay.

For more information please visit <http://sustainableballard.org>

Faith Pettis named Affordable Housing Advisory Board chair

In mid-March, the Washington State Department of Commerce today Faith Pettis as the new chair of the state's Affordable Housing Advisory Board, a two-year term appointed by Gov. Chris Gregoire.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Board advises Commerce on housing and related issues. Pettis, a founding partner of Pacifica Law Group in Seattle, brings nearly 20 years of experience in affordable housing finance to the position. She replaces Heyward Watson, who retired from the board in



Our Redeemers Lutheran Church in Ballard became the first church to host Seattle's 'Safe Parking Program' aimed at providing safe overnight parking for people living in their cars. Photo by Sleepycat5. Courtesy of Creative Commons.

November 2011. In her role as chair, Pettis will lead the board in advising Commerce, the Governor's Office, and the Legislature on housing needs in the state, developing the board's policies, procedures and five-year housing plan, and providing analysis and input on housing-related matters.

"It's exciting to be more involved in policy issues surrounding affordable housing in Washington," Pettis said. "I thank the Governor for the appointment and look forward to working with colleagues in the nonprofit, for-profit and governmental sectors on statewide issues ranging from homelessness to foreclosures."

More at www.commerce.wa.gov.

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22nd Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness

The 22nd Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness will take place in Yakima on May 15-18. Hosted by the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, in collaboration with Building Changes and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, this annual event focuses statewide attention on advocacy, training and education on issues of homelessness in Washington state. More info at endhomelessnesswa.org.

NWCLT Spring Gathering

Mark your calendars now for the Northwest Community Land Trust Coalition's Spring Gathering and Annual Members Meeting. From May 16th-18th at Menucha Retreat & Conference Center in Corbett, OR. More information and registration at the NWCLT website, www.nwcltc.org.

New Housing Lister and Locator Website for King County

HousingSearchNW.org, sponsored by the City of Seattle, King County, United Way of King County, Seattle Housing Authority, and King County Housing Authority, is a new free service for landlords and tenants. In addition to searchable, real-time, detailed listings of available housing, the site also provides helpful tools such as a rent checklist and affordability calculator, and links

to other helpful resources. Please visit HousingSearchNW.org.

2012 AHMA CARH Joint Convention in Coeur d'Alene

The 2012 AHMA CARH Joint Convention takes place from April 23-25, 2012 at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. The theme is "BACK TO BASICS – in Affordable Housing Management!" In this climate of dwindling resources, each of us needs to have a solid knowledge base in program regulations, fair housing, operations/maintenance, reporting, and many other areas, to ensure we have the tools necessary to provide the best level of safe, clean and affordable housing possible. This convention focuses on the basics – and we'll arm you with tips and techniques to help you achieve success! For more information and registration please visit www.wa-carh.org.