Governor Jay Inslee releases his budget for 2015-2017 which spelled out the Governor’s priorities toward housing, education, transportation, and carbon accountability, while at the same time trying to close a projected budget shortfall of more than $2 billion.

Of particular interest is the Governor’s commitment to addressing the lack of housing across the state as well as the underlying conditions that affect homelessness. Housing advocates were pleasantly surprised that affordable housing and homelessness programs fared well in the governor’s budget proposal. Most importantly, Governor Inslee proposed funding for the Housing Trust Fund at $75 million, which represents a much needed 33% increase from last biennium. $60 million in funding would come from bonds while an additional $15 million would be generated from carbon accountability funds. The trend of funding the housing needs of the state’s most vulnerable populations, including children, veterans, disabled, and farm workers, will most likely continue.

Additionally, $5 million in the Governor’s budget will be used for the Trust Fund Portfolio Preservation Program, and $5 million is proposed for an ultra-efficient housing demonstration. While all projects that receive state funding must meet the Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard that promotes environmental quality, there is the potential to do even better. This demonstration will inform us on how best to proceed.

Funding for the Ending Family Homelessness pilot will increase by $4 million through the

continued on page 3
Seattle Mayor Increases Shelter Space and Proposes Encampment Ordinance

By Melissa Tiberio

At the end of 2014, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray appointed an Emergency Task Force on Unsheltered Homelessness. This 23-member group was tasked with working over a short 90-day period to identify low cost solutions to Seattle’s homeless crisis. The Task Force members met with the mayor on December 18 and identified three top priorities plus other proposals for the city to undertake. The three top priorities were: 1.) use of City-owned facilities for shelter; 2.) passage of an encampment ordinance to allow tent cities on public and private land; and 3.) increase shelters and outreach for youth and young adults. On January 14, 2015, Mayor Murray held a press conference and announced his proposal based on the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

The Mayor’s plan centers on shelter space and tent encampments. The plan will immediately increase the number of shelter beds and will look at City-owned buildings as potential future shelter sites. He also proposes a controversial plan for City-sponsored encampment sites that could allow up to three City or privately owned parcels to become permitted as homeless encampments.

The plan is similar to one proposed by City Councilmember Nick Licata in previous years.

“I’m pleased that the Mayor will be reintroducing a new version of the bill I proposed last year to allow for longer term temporary encampments,” said Licata. “This is not the solution to homelessness, but we simply cannot wait to solve homelessness. The City has a responsibility today to the 2,300 people sleeping out on any given night in Seattle, so that they can at least stay together and stay safe.”

The specifics of the Mayor’s plan are laid out below.

Increase in Shelter Space

The City of Seattle currently funds about 1,700 shelter beds. Last year’s numbers from the One Night Count indicate that there are approximately 2,300 people sleeping on the streets each night. The Mayor stated that he will immediately add 50 new shelter beds to the King County Administration Building’s emergency shelter. By the end of the month he plans to add 15 more beds at a Capitol Hill youth shelter. The Mayor’s plan of adding only 65 beds when we have 2,300 people without shelter--while a step in the right direction--is clearly not enough to provide any sort of long-term solution.

The Mayor made it clear that he recognizes the discrepancy in numbers and knows there is much more to be done. During a question and answer period following his press conference, he noted that there is not much more the City can do on its own. The City needs funding sources and help from neighboring cities to make a larger impact.

Not satisfied with the current number of beds, the Mayor also hopes that an inventory of City-owned buildings will provide additional shelter space. The Mayor is waiting on information about building investments that would need to be made to convert them into shelters and said he would announce information about additional shelter space at the end of February.

Tent City Encampments

In a bold move for the Mayor, he announced that he will propose an ordinance to allow up to three new permitted encampments in Seattle at any one time. This proposed ordinance, which will be forwarded to the Seattle City Council, will not impact the current encampments sponsored by religious institutions. The ordinance will instead add to the number of encampments by allowing City-owned land to be used as encampment sites. The new encampments will have strict regulations to follow, but this is the first time a Seattle Mayor has shown such support for tent cities and homeless encampments.

“Permitted encampments are not, in my view, a long-term strategy to end homelessness. But planned, organized encampments have less impact on our neighborhoods and provide a safer environment than what we see on our streets today,” stated Mayor Murray.

The three encampments will be able to shelter up to 100 people at each site and will be required to move once every 12 months. The sites cannot be located in residential areas or public parks, must be located near transit, and cannot be within one mile of another

continued on next page
encampment site. Locations that fit these criteria may be difficult to find. It will be interesting to see which sites are ultimately proposed and accepted.

In another proposed change, the three City encampments do not have to be sponsored by a religious institution. A social service agency can support the City encampments, but they must follow numerous requirements. The selected agencies will need to provide case management services and collect data for the City. There will also be community notification protocols and insurance requirements in place. The City of Seattle will provide staffing and resources to help walk agencies through the process.

While the Mayor’s proposal still lacks long-term solutions and presents some challenges, it does help increase the number of safe spaces immediately available to individuals experiencing homelessness.

As Mark Putnam, Director of the Committee to End Homelessness, stated: “The Mayor’s strategies recognize that those in a homeless situation first need a safe place to rest their heads at night. Shelters and encampments offer that safety.”

“We have not seen the proposed legislation from the Mayor yet, but we are thrilled that he is supporting the use of City-owned property for tent city encampments,” said Sharon Lee, Executive Director of LIHI and member of the Task Force. “For homeless families and individuals, it is much better to be living in a safe, well-run tent city than to be out alone sleeping on the streets. Too many homeless people have died from violence and exposure.”

Councilmember Mike O’Brien summed up the sentiment of the Mayor’s proposal by stating: “Shelter is a basic human right. As leaders of the City we all have an obligation to make sure that everyone in our community has access to a safe place to sleep.”

Melissa Tiberio is Volunteer Programs Coordinator for LIHI and can be reached at mtiberio@lihi.org. For a copy of the Report from the Emergency Task Force on Unsheltered Homelessness go to: http://murray.seattle.gov.

Governor Inslee’s 2015-2017 Housing Budget

State’s General Fund. This program successfully matched homeless TANF families with housing and work opportunities by integrating supportive services provided through the Department of Commerce and DSHS, which resulting in a reduction in the time a family needed/received housing subsidies, a reduction in homelessness recidivism, and greater stability for the families. The program ran in a limited number of counties across the state, and is now being implemented statewide.

The governor also proposed to establish the Office of Youth Homelessness within the Department of Commerce. This office would specifically provide vision and direction in responding to the unique needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. In addition, three programs from the Children’s Administration at DSHS – Crisis Residential Centers, Street Youth Program, and HOPE beds - will be transferred to the Department of Commerce, under the guidance of the newly established Office of Youth Homelessness. The Washington Family Fund has been renamed the Washington Youth and Families Fund. A decade of collaboration on service to homeless families will be expanded to include youth and young adult homeless. $3 million in state funding will be leveraged with matching dollars to improve how families and youth are served.

Students experiencing homelessness are 87% more likely not to graduate high school. The state will invest $54 million to increase graduation attainment by extending learning time and adding necessary wraparound services. Family engagement coordinators at schools will also perform a number of activities including serving as liaison between families and teachers to connect families with social services.

The Governor took a bold stance in proposing a budget this generous which included new revenue. We are very appreciative of Governor Inslee’s proposals, and all of our reader should reach out to their legislators to make it clear that we will support them as they follow the Governor’s lead.

The Governor’s full budget proposal is available online at www.ofm.wa.gov/budget15/default.asp. A detailed analysis of the budget can be found on the website of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, wliha.org/blog/2015-budget-10-our-analysis.
Getting Ready for State Advocacy 2015 – A Preview at the Budget Matters Conference

By Mercedes Elizalde

The Budget Matters Conference is an annual conference put on by the Washington Budget and Policy Center and attended by state housing advocates. The December 2014 conference in Seattle was attended by the Low Income Housing Institute, the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, the YWCA, as well as other community groups dedicated to supporting affordable housing and stronger communities.

A major topic of discussion at the conference was what the next state legislative session will bring. How will we balance the budget? And how can we keep from cutting all our vital programs to accomplish this? How will we satisfy the 2012 McCleary decision that requires the legislature to annually increase funding to K-12 education by billions of dollars each year through 2018 until a minimum requirement of $9,741 per student per year is met? (In 2014, the state legislature was held in contempt of court for not finalizing the initial parts of their plan to find the additional funding.)

The biggest idea discussed at the conference was new revenue, specifically new revenue that didn’t involve increasing sales tax or cutting other community programs, but rather new revenue from new sources. The Revenue Coalition, featuring many housing advocacy partners, is urging the legislature to find new revenue streams to support education and all other vital services and programs that help students show up ready to learn.

The position of conference attendees was that we cannot expect to fund education by cutting meal programs, child care, medical coverage or housing. If we invest new dollars in education at the expense of all other programs we will see children showing up to school scared, hungry, sick, and tired.

Children need housing stability as a foundational requirement to prepare for education. Students experiencing homelessness are 87% more likely to not graduate high school. This is why housing justice partners are coming together to demand that the legislature reinvest in the Housing Trust Fund.

Governor Inslee has already announced that he too will support new revenue. The governor addressed the issue during his conference-opening speech and shared his budget recommendations. In order to show the true need for new revenue he outlined 2 budgets he created. The first budget reflected implementation of all cuts necessary to satisfy the McCleary decision: the resulting budget was devastating, showing that all the beneficial social programs that have taken so much work to create over the years would become empty shells in order to satisfy McCleary.

Inslee’s second budget, which calls for new revenue sources, showed a true investment in the whole child and the whole family. In his statement, the governor called for funding for the Housing Trust Fund Account at $75 million, a 33% increase from last biennium. $60 million in funding would come from bonds while an additional $15 million would be...
Finally National Housing Trust Fund is Funded!

By Joshua Okrent

In December 2014, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) formally directed Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac to set aside money for funding affordable housing projects, saying both mortgage entities are financially fit to contribute to the National Housing Trust Fund and the Capital Magnet Fund.

The change in the law was a testament to the long advocacy campaign of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Because of the passionate leadership of the NLIHC, with the backing of many other advocates for affordable housing, Congress created the Trust Fund with the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 - more than six years ago. But the financial crisis prevented Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac from contributing monies until now. The FHFA suspended the set-aside to allow the enterprises to recover during their conservatorship period. As a result, the promise to create more affordable housing across the country was delayed.

However, the FHFA has now determined that while the GSE’s are still in conservatorship, they are financially stable enough to withstand the .042 percent set aside which will finance both funds. Both Fannie and Freddie must begin putting aside money for the programs in January 2015.

Undaunted by the obstacles created by the most recent economic recession, NLIHC never lost sight of its primary goal of ensuring that one day the Trust Fund would receive and then distribute dollars to help create affordable housing in every state. The coalition tried multiple strategies for implementing and funding the National Housing Trust Fund, including several versions of legislation that would have provided funding from the GSEs.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development has now drafted proposed regulations to disburse the monies collected and will move to finalize them as soon as possible. Advocates estimate the contributions by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will generate anywhere between $300-$500 million annually starting January 1, 2015, which will be split by formula between the National Housing Trust Fund and Capital Magnet Fund.

FUNDING THE NATIONAL HOUSING TRUST FUND IS NOT GOING TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR THE STATE TO MAKE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING, BUT IT IS GOING TO MEAN THE WORLD TO THE VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND FAMILIES WHO WILL END UP WITH A PLACE TO CALL HOME THANKS TO THIS INVESTMENT. MY BIGGEST HOPE THAT THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, AND THIS WILL HELP PRIME THE PUMP FOR US TO ENACT A LARGER REFORM.”

– Ben Miksch, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

The Trust Fund is not a panacea for the national problem of affordable housing. It will go a very long way, providing funds for bricks and mortar, creating more affordable housing for thousands of Americans, but the operational and service side so vital to affordable housing will continue to rely on other federal programs.

There will remain a strong and fundamental need for additional housing choice vouchers and more rental aid to ensure our most vulnerable neighbors who struggle with housing costs are housed. We must be vigilant and continue to press Congress and the Administration for action on these items.

Most importantly, our elected officials cannot be lulled into the false impression the Trust Fund comprehensively addresses the needs or allows for funding offsets in other vital affordable housing programs.

Ben Miksch, the Operations & Special Projects Coordinator for Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, said “I am really excited about Mel Watt’s announcement to put funding into the National Housing Trust Fund, and I think it’s a testament to the power of people not giving up hope and speaking up for what their communities need. It’s not going to eliminate the need for the state to make capital investments in affordable housing, but it is going to mean the world to the vulnerable people and families who will end up with a place to call home thanks to this investment. My biggest hope that this is just the beginning, and this will help prime the pump for us to enact a larger reform.”

Visit the FHFA website at www.fhfa.gov to review the letters to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as well as the FHFA official statement.
LGBT Senior Housing

By Emily Wax-Thibodeaux

The suspicious questions and puzzled looks started as soon as Sidney Meyers, 74, put in his applications to live in a sun-dappled Florida retirement community. Was he ever married? Why not? No children? No grandchildren!

It was challenging to find a place to live, because the residents and landlords all knew he was gay, he said. Would he be having “guests?” several asked, often with raised eyebrows.

“It was painful because I had no proud pictures of grandchildren to show off. In my generation, gay men weren’t allowed to adopt children, let alone marry,” Meyers said. “We weren’t even allowed to exist.”

But today, after deciding that several other communities in Florida weren’t for him, Meyers has found a home where he can be proud of his life. He lives in the John C. Anderson apartments, a six-story building that opened recently in Philadelphia, PA and caters to low-income LGBT seniors, many of them pioneers of the gay rights movement.

The project, affectionately called “the gay-dy shady acres” by residents, is being hailed as a model for similar federally backed housing projects in the District of Columbia and more than a dozen other cities across the country.

The initiative is part of a broader campaign by the federal government to address what officials say is growing housing discrimination based on sexual orientation. The trend is due in part to more gay Americans being out of the closet, officially married and more aware of their rights than ever before, said Gustavo Velasquez, assistant secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at HUD.

Since last year, HUD has received 150 allegations of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation. The first nationwide study of LGBT housing discrimination, released by the department last year, found that heterosexual couples were favored over gay male couples and lesbian couples nearly 16 percent of the time.

In the coming months, federal officials said they plan to dispatch the first LGBT “fair housing testers” across the country, modeled after testers who have traditionally posed as prospective tenants to see whether there is racial discrimination.

While the government has long brought cases against housing discrimination on the basis of race and religion, federal officials say sexual orientation and gender identity are the new front lines.

The Anderson apartments already have a 100-person waiting list. And that number is likely to grow. About 1.5 million Americans who are 65 or older identify as LGBT, with that number expected to double by 2030, according to the Institute for Multigenerational Health.

A former Army private first class, Meyers once worked as a jewelry designer and wrote gay erotica under a pen name. He said he spent a lifetime feeling like he did not fit in and grew bitter because he never realized his dream of becoming a parent. But this self-described “chronic kvetch” has found that since he moved into the building that he has been “flat-out optimistic and even happy.”

On this recent afternoon, a gay Buddhist priest led a meditation session for residents in the roof-top garden. In the community room downstairs, a former dance teacher, Deirdre McLaurin, 62, who said she’s finally able to openly say that she’s lesbian, relaxed next to silver-haired John James, who worked for the National Institutes of Health in the 1960s, taught at Montgomery College and published the first AIDS treatment newsletter.

“Being out was so dangerous back then that when I attended a protest, the newspapers would only show my pants in pictures because I would get fired by the government if anyone knew I was gay,” said James, 73.

Today, that same government is taking steps to equalize access to housing for LGBT people. The Fair Housing Act, which explicitly bars several forms of housing discrimination, does not specifically include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. But the Obama administration says this discrimination may still be covered by the law.

In 2012, the administration required that federal housing assistance and mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration be provided without regard to perceived sexual orientation or gender.

The establishment of the Anderson apartments was the making of Mark Segal, a maverick and early gay activist who in the 1960s belonged to the radical Gay Liberation Front. He called

“I TOLD HIM THAT THIS WAS THE ‘FIRST OUT GENERATION,’ THE BRAVE PIONEERS WHO WERE OUT FIGHTING FOR THE CAUSE AND WEREN’T ABLE TO GET JOBS WITH 401(K) PLANS. THEY LOST MANY OF THEIR FRIENDS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS TO AIDS. THEIR FAMILIES DISOWNED THEM FOR BEING GAY.”

– Mark Segal
the Anderson project “one of the most important things I’ve ever done.”

Over an oversized matzo ball soup in a Jewish deli, Segal — a lightning-fast-talking bundle of caffeinated energy who’s constantly recognized on the Center City streets — recounted how he had pitched the idea of the housing project to President Barack Obama. When Obama came to Philadelphia in 2010, Segal was part of a group that met with him.

“I told him that this was the ‘first out generation,’ the brave pioneers who were out fighting for the cause and weren’t able to get jobs with 401(k) plans,” he said. “They lost many of their friends and support networks to AIDS. Their families disowned them for being gay.”

Today, he told the president, they can’t afford to live in the gay neighborhoods their lives inspired. Obama put him in touch with HUD officials.

As Segal told the tale, deli patrons kept coming up to him to thank him for all he has done for the gay community.

The housing project has been classified as “LGBT friendly,” so it does not exclude anyone. (There are a handful of straight residents, many of whom have LGBT sons and daughters who they want to be able to visit without judgment.)

The rental apartments are bright one-bedrooms with oversize windows. To qualify, seniors must earn between $8,000 and $33,000 a year. The project was built in partnership with Pennrose Properties, which specializes in affordable housing. It received $6 million from the state, $2 million from Washington and $11.5 million in low-income federal tax credits, according to Segal.

Segal said his favorite feature in the apartment complex are the vast, walk-in “drag-queen closets,” which he said symbolize the community being out in the open.

The bright lobby, has a life-size portrait of the project’s namesake: John C. Anderson, a first-term city councilman who died in 1983, at age 41, reportedly from AIDS.

Every floor is decorated with framed black-and-white photographs of the 1969 Stonewall riots — demonstrations following a police raid on a gay bar in New York’s Greenwich Village that helped launch the gay rights movement — and other protests with activists bearing signs that read, “Homosexuality is not a sin,” and “Gay Power!”

Susan Silverman says that even though she’s 65 and walks with a cane, she’ll always be the “radical lesbian feminist” who protested against the Miss America pageant and worked alongside Segal with the Gay Liberation Front.

She moved here from a walk-up studio apartment in Brooklyn that she had rented for 40 years, attracted by the lesbian-friendly atmosphere and affordable rent — not to mention the elevators and on-site laundry.

“It really resonated with me,” she said while sitting in the lobby library.

Just outside, in the garden, Roosevelt Adams, 67, was setting out a breakfast tray with fresh coffee and pastries. He said he moved here from another apartment in Philadelphia after his landlady threatened that if he brought a male date by, she would “call the police.”

He no longer worries about that. He may actually meet someone in the building and go on a date, he said. This time, with his neighbors cheering him on.

This article is adapted from a story by Emily Wax-Thibodeaux that originally appeared in The Washington Post.

One Night Count Finds 3,772 people in King County with No Shelter

By Nicole Macri

The One Night Count of homeless people in King County took place early on the morning of January 23. This was the 35th year that dedicated volunteers ventured out into the cold and dark to count the number of people spending the night outside because they do not have a warm, safe place to stay.

Alison Eisinger, Executive Director of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, which organizes the count, reported that 3,772 men, women and children had no shelter in King County on the night of the One Night Count, a substantial increase over those found without shelter last year. During the 2014 Count, volunteers found 3,123 people surviving outside without shelter. “This year’s Count is heart-breaking evidence that we cannot cover our community’s most basic needs. Clearly, the crisis of people homeless and without shelter is growing, and clearly we must respond by using every resource we have. Everyone needs a safe place to rest,” said Eisinger.

Hundreds of volunteers helping with the count found people in sleeping in doorways, beneath overpasses, in their vehicles, in alleys, or walking around, in the communities of Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Seattle, Shoreline, Skyway, Vashon Island, White Center and Woodinville.

The reasons people are without shelter vary. Lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment, untreated mental illness or addiction, and domestic violence all contribute to homelessness.

“We do the One Night Count to document how many people lack basic shelter in our community” said Eisinger. “We already know that homelessness is a crisis. We know that there are good and effective programs that have helped and housed many people. Yet we have not matched capacity with the need. This morning’s count shows that our region’s unmet need for shelter and housing is greater than ever.”

The data inform elected officials and planners at all levels of government about the extent of homelessness in their community. Tonight’s count does not include the thousands of people staying in shelters and transitional housing; they are counted separately.

Mark Putnam, Director of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, a broad coalition working to end homelessness in King County that has ended homelessness for 36,000 people since 2005, added, “We need to recognize homelessness as a crisis and not a given. All of us, our entire community, must rally together if we are to end homelessness, and today’s count gives us new data on the enormity of our challenge.”

The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness is an independent coalition of organizations, local governments, public housing authorities, religious congregations, advocacy groups, and individuals who work every night and day to ensure safety and survival for people while they are homeless. More information on SKCCH at www.homelessinfo.org.
New Partnerships Herald Rebirth of Walla Walla Community

By Sheila Hagar

Over the last 18 months, several nonprofit partners have combined their efforts to thoroughly sweep away the ghosts of the past at Valle Lindo, the housing development in Walla Walla County formerly known as “Farm Labor Camp.” Terraced permanent seating, a concrete pad shaded by a large and sturdy pergola, 20 new trees, and abundant lighting will replace a spot once filled with trash, filth, and bad memories. What has been raised, instead, is a place that speaks of safety, creativity and community, said Jason Hahn, housing operation director for Walla Walla Housing Authority.

Pomegranate Center, based in Issaquah, Wash., has facilitated a number of artistic and structural projects in the Walla Walla Valley and was back to help Valle Lindo residents claim the development as their own. Over the past eight months Blue Mountain Action Council, the Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust, and Walla Walla Housing Authority have partnered with Pomegranate Center to put a budget of $25,000, donations of commercial labor, discounted supplies, and volunteer hours together to create the right reflection of a renewed community, Hahn said.

The flat 46-acre parcel off Highway 11 near the Washington/Oregon border provides homes to people and families connected to employment in Walla Walla Valley’s agricultural industry. Over the years the camp suffered from a lack of maintenance and leadership, plus a growing gang presence. The Walla Walla Housing Authority assumed full site responsibility in 2013, after starting off in 2011 by building 60 new apartments. Even with the new construction, numerous ramshackle duplexes and outbuildings squatted on the landscape.

A structure known as “the big house” claimed the parcel’s single hill, looming over the single-family homes below. Last used as a home for a resident manager who had left the job abruptly, the three-story structure — originally built to house a trio of families — was abandoned, each room clotted with garbage and personal debris. The odor alone made the house uninhabitable, Walla Walla Housing Authority Project Manager Heather Dunnagan said in a 2013 site report. “The smells from the house can be detected from outside at over 75 feet away,” she said. “This is a definite health hazard, and entry should be limited.” A training fire for area firefighters last May took the house down to the ground. Once emptied of its history, the stage was set for its future, Hahn said.

Since building the first apartment complexes in 2011, Walla Walla Housing Authority is now completing Phase 2 of Valle Lindo’s transformation with 68 more family-sized apartments. The complexes, painted in the colors of the earth, surround a second community center that acts as the front door of the new gathering place across the street and up the gentle slope.

Initially residents expressed a desire for more complicated plans, Hahn recalled. “Indoor soccer field, a water park ... very expensive projects we didn’t have the budget for,” he said. Matanovic said he hopes this community will instead be encouraged by the alliances they’ve witnessed in this week’s endeavor.

“It will be a beautiful project when it’s done. Projects like this can only happen in partnerships.”

As the Pomegranate Center team retreats from Valle Lindo to go elsewhere, it leaves behind others trained to carry on the mission here. “So what we leave behind is not just a project but the expertise,” Matanovic said. “Right now in our society we tend to argue, not collaborate. We need to collaborate.”

Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle Awards $4.8 Million for Affordable Housing

Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle Awards $4.8 Million for Affordable Housing

In December, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle announced the award of $4.8 million in Affordable Housing Program (AHP) grants to support 13 projects providing 465 units of affordable housing in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

The Seattle Bank distributes its AHP funding through its member financial institutions, which work with for-profit and nonprofit organizations in their communities to address local affordable housing needs. The Seattle Bank’s 2014 AHP awards will benefit households with special needs, homeless individuals, native peoples, those recovering from addiction, seniors, and veterans, among others.

“We congratulate our 2014 AHP award recipients and look forward to seeing these dollars put to work in their communities,” said Seattle Bank President and CEO Michael L. Wilson. “We also applaud our members and their community partners for working together to understand and address their communities’ unique housing needs. It’s these types of partnerships that make the communities we all serve better places to live.”

2014 Affordable Housing Program awards in Washington state include:
- $500,000 for Bellevue Apartments in Bellevue. Sponsored by Umpqua Bank and Low Income Housing Institute.
- $234,000 for Ferncliff Townhomes in Bainbridge Island. Sponsored by HomeStreet Bank and Housing Resources Board.
- $700,000 for Freedoms Path at Vancouver WA in Vancouver. Sponsored by Banner Bank and Affordable Housing Solutions, Inc.
- $75,000 for McKenzie Green Commons in Bellingham. Sponsored by Peoples Bank and Kulshan Community Land Trust.
- $422,953 for Monroe Family Village-2014 in Monroe. Sponsored by Heritage Bank and Housing Hope.
- $200,000 for PROVAIL TBI Residential Facility in Shoreline. Sponsored by Banner Bank and Provail.

AHP funds are awarded on a competitive basis. To receive an AHP award, an organization must demonstrate its ability to effectively create affordable housing and promote community stability.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle is a member-owned cooperative, serving 319 financial institutions. The Seattle Bank provides its members with access to wholesale funding, which they use to make home mortgage, small business, and other loans in their communities.

The Seattle Bank also works with its members and their community partners to promote affordable housing and economic development. Each year, the bank provides 10 percent of its profits to fund affordable housing—both rental and home-ownership—and provides millions of dollars in reduced-rate loans for affordable housing and community economic development.

The Seattle Bank’s Affordable Housing Program provides subsidy to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate affordable rental or owner-occupied housing for low- and moderate-income households. Applications for 2015 AHP funds are due May 15, 2015.

Visit the 2014 AHP Awards page at www.fhlbsea.com for a more complete description of the projects receiving 2014 AHP awards.
Everett Housing Authority Preserves 458 Affordable Housing Units

By Joshua Okrent

On December 22 the Everett Housing Authority successfully completed the largest HUD RAD conversion to date in the state of Washington. The ten-project, $90 million recapitalization effort will enable the Authority to rehabilitate and preserve 458 affordable housing units in Everett, WA.

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program seeks to address the outstanding capital needs of public housing developments and to preserve those developments as a long-term source of affordable housing. In its simplest form, RAD allows public housing to be mortgaged or used as collateral so that Public Housing Authorities can access private debt and equity. The project financing was structured to minimize timing delays and rely less on public funding sources. Instead, the project utilized 4% low income housing tax credits, EHA seller financing and privately placed tax-exempt bonds.

The “first component” of the program allows properties funded under the Public Housing and Section 8 Mod Rehab programs to convert their assistance to long-term, project-based Section 8 contracts. The “second component” of RAD allows an owner of projects funded under HUD’s legacy programs (Rental Supplement, Rental Assistance Payment, and Moderate Rehabilitation) to convert units to Section 8 project-based vouchers.

Two of the properties included in the $90 million recapitalization effort were the Bakerview and Grandview Apartments. The Grandview family project, which has 148 units, was built in the early 1950’s. The Bakerview has 151 units and was built in 1968.

The EHA was assisted by real estate consulting firm Brawner & Company. Ashley Lommers-Johnson, the Executive Director of the Everett Housing Authority, said “RAD represents one of the most ingenious opportunities for PHA’s to achieve the goals of improving the long-term well-being of residents, the properties, housing authorities, and their staff. With the assistance of our key partners, including JH Brawner Co., the Bakerview/Grandview RAD conversion has become a great example of local innovation combined with a unique financial opportunity to transform public housing.”

The Everett Housing Authority has nearly 70 years of experience in managing properties that are subject to detailed regulatory controls. Its approximately 100 full and part-time staff are experienced in tenant selection, income and rent calculations, lease enforcement, marketing, retention, maintenance, finance and accounting, record keeping and reporting. EHA also has a growing portfolio of affordable properties subject to general controls. The Authority currently owns 774 residential units, all of which it manages and maintains directly.

The $24,000,000 renovation will focus on energy-efficient upgrades, durable materials, general modernization and building envelope upgrades. The rehabilitation of these properties will create approximately 120 jobs in the Everett area.

Contact the Everett Housing Authority at www.evha.org. For more information about the HUD RAD program please visit www.huduser.org/portal/publications/pdf/RAD_Evaluation.pdf.
Rep. Appleton again picked to lead House Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs Committee

State Rep. Sherry Appleton (D-Poulsbo) has been tapped once again by her colleagues to chair the House committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs. “I’m grateful to have the trust of my colleagues,” Appleton said. “Our committee is going to be a busy one during the next two years, dealing with issues that are vital to our district, and the entire state. I’m looking forward to the opening gavel next month.”

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs Committee is charged with considering issues relating to, among other things, community development, veteran-related legislation, tourism and the government-to-government relationship of the state and Indian tribes.

The committee also considers bills relating to housing, including the accessibility and affordability of housing, state assistance to low-income housing, housing authorities, and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

Appleton took the reins of the committee last January, when the previous chair was appointed to an open seat in the state Senate. Appleton had been serving as vice chair, but her elevation to the chair was not automatic; members of the majority party choose committee leaders based on merit, and her peers felt Appleton was best-suited for the job.

The 105-day 2015 session of the Legislature opened Jan. 12 in Olympia.

State Boosts Funding for Mattawa Farm Worker Housing Project

A farm worker housing project in Mattawa has received a funding boost from the state.

Esperanza II, a complex for seasonal farm laborers in the small Grant County city, was awarded a loan-grant combination worth $2.2 million from the state Department of Commerce’s Housing Trust Fund. Construction has already started on the expansion at Esperanza, which will eventually accommodate up to 256 seasonal laborers working in the area’s booming orchard and vineyard industries. City officials consider temporary housing one of the community’s most critical needs. The state grant will pay for half of the beds.

The rest will be paid by a separate $3 million federal grant and loan package awarded in October by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development office.

Esperanza I was built in 1999 after then-Gov. Gary Locke, who had seen shipping containers used as temporary emergency housing during a visit to Asia, integrated the idea into housing for the rapidly growing farm worker community in Mattawa.

With nearly a $2.2 million loan-grant package from state and federal sources, the project outfitted 26, 40-foot-long stainless steel shipping containers with plumbing, heating and cooling equipment, transforming them into seasonal homes for farm workers and their families.

Another 34 units were built with traditional construction.

New Study Says Student Loans are Key Obstacle in Purchasing Homes

Nearly one out of four Americans knows someone who has delayed buying a home because of student loan debt, according to findings from the second annual America at Home survey commissioned by NeighborWorks America.

While the survey shows 60 percent of adults say that owning a home is either the “most important” or a “very important” part of the “American Dream,” the burden of student loan debt and today’s overly tight lending environment appears to be working against many potential homebuyers.

Additional key findings from the survey:

- Of those who have student loan debt, 49 percent say their debt is at least somewhat of an obstacle to buying a home. When given a list of potential obstacles to home buying, “student loan debt” is the single largest obstacle among those who have debt.

- Twenty percent of those with student loan debt are more likely to say their opinion of homeownership has changed for the worse over the past five years. Furthermore, these participants are 10 percentage points less confident they can find “a mortgage that is right for them.”

- Student loan debt disproportionately affects blacks and Hispanics. When combined, African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately 20 percent of the population, but represent 29 percent of those with student loans.

For a copy of the full findings, please go to NeighborWorks.org/HousingSurvey. Contact Douglas Robinson at drobinson@nw.org
Bellingham Council Shifts Levy Money into Homeless Services

By Joshua Okrent

Starting this January, a street outreach team in Bellingham will go to where the homeless are as part of a more intensive effort to reduce the number of homeless people living on the streets of that city.

Called the Homeless Outreach Team, this effort is being made possible as the result of a unanimous vote by the Bellingham City Council on November 10, in which $1.25 million was dedicated to the program, which will include additional housing vouchers. The money comes from Bellingham’s 2012 voter-approved seven-year, $21 million housing levy. Levy dollars are used to build and preserve homes as well as for rental assistance and supportive services.

To provide money for the new effort, the City Council agreed to shift funds from building and preservation — $250,000 a year over the next five years — to provide for the new services.

That concerned Councilmember Michael Lilliquist, despite assurances that the levy was exceeding its goals on all fronts and that, even with the diversion, more than $8.5 million still would be available for the production of rental housing for the remainder of the levy’s life. “I don’t particularly like this shift because I think that production is actually the long-term solution,” Lilliquist said. “I’m worried that we’re robbing Peter to pay Paul and I still want to support Peter.” Still, in the end, he decided to support the effort.

“This is a segue to help everyone be relocated until we have housing for them. It is supporting the housing-first model, which we know works, and we need to make that a priority,” said Council member Pinky Vargas. “It doesn’t mean that we won’t be building affordable housing. It just means that we are helping those that will be displaced or currently have no home get into housing as soon as possible.”

Prior to the vote, Mayor Kelli Linville urged the council to approve the funding request, noting it would provide hope sooner rather than later. “Not for three years from now when we can build something, but for today,” Linville said. “This gives me a tool to help people now. It’s going to make a big difference.”

There are an estimated 200 people who are homeless on any given day in Bellingham. They live on the streets, under bridges and in vehicles. Or they camp in Bellingham neighborhoods, according to a memo to the City Council. Some of them are the heaviest users of costly public services, the council was told.

“It’s a stubbornly persistent level of unsheltered homelessness that we’ve had with us for quite some time,” Greg Winter, director of the Whatcom Homeless Service Center at the Opportunity Council, told the council’s Community and Economic Development Committee prior to the full City Council’s vote.

Those who help provide housing and services for the homeless said the new street team and additional housing vouchers would do more than help the homeless. Taxpayer dollars would be saved by keeping the homeless out of jail and emergency rooms, and trash and waste also would be kept out of the environment. The idea behind the Homeless Outreach Team is to have professionals with expertise in mental health and chemical dependency issues out on the street. They would work with police and emergency medical services.

The new approach will cost a little over $434,000 a year. Of that total, nearly $165,000 would be spent for the outreach team and nearly $270,000 for new housing vouchers and services. The city will be paying the lion’s share of the cost, but other sources will round out the budget. That includes federal HOME Investment Partnership funds and $127,381 a year from the Whatcom County Health Department and other local organizations.

The hope is that the vouchers will help provide stable housing for at least 30 chronically homeless people and 100 families. They will be housed in private, for-profit rental units in the city.

Learn more about this story and contact the Bellingham City Council at www.cob.org/government/council.
New Affordable Housing Complex Opens in Neah Bay

By Joshua Okrent

The Makah tribe’s first permanent supportive housing complex has opened in Neah Bay.

The Tribal Council joined community leaders, residents and developers to celebrate the August opening of the Sail River Longhouse Apartments. Formerly homeless families and individuals will live in 21 affordable apartment units and benefit from access to tribal health care, employment and counseling programs, officials said.

“My fellow Makah council members and I believe that housing, when combined with supportive services, will provide families with a new beginning full of hope that they can overcome past barriers to their self-sufficiency,” said Timothy J. Greene Sr., chairman of the Makah Tribal Council.

Built to state standards, the two-story garden-style longhouse building wraps around a courtyard and a smaller community building. The longhouse is near the recently opened tribal wellness center, the first building in the future Makah health care campus, and located west of a planned community garden. The commons building provides indoor space for classes and community gatherings, lounge space for informal talks and sessions, spaces for staff, including case managers and counselors, a community kitchen and a common laundry. The building form and exposed wood structure evoke the traditional Coastal Salish longhouse; the circular fireplace at the center creates a warm, inviting space for residents, staff, and visitors.

Responding to Tribal needs, Environmental Works designed 21 units of affordable housing (20 resident units and one unit for a manager) with a commons building where services are offered to support the tribal members who call the Sail River Longhouse home. The two-story, U-shaped residential building and one-story longhouse-style commons building enclose a landscaped courtyard. The twenty resident units face onto the courtyard; 12 one-bedroom, 4 two-bedroom and 4 three-bedroom units house a total of 80 people maximum at any one time. The larger units are specifically designated for families in the process of reunifying.

Culturally significant materials and iconography are incorporated throughout. The primary design motif of the courtyard is the circle, an important symbol in Makah tribal culture. The courtyard, wrapped with a covered walkway framed in cedar posts and beams, incorporates boulders, driftwood and native plants, honoring the Makah connection to their ancestral home. Together, building and landscape combine to create positive spaces that are essential for healing. Through multiple community design charrettes the project architect, Environmental Works, gained the insight needed to create this restorative space.

Sail River Longhouse is funded with a $1.2 million loan from the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, $3.4 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity syndicated by Enterprise Community Investment Inc., $500,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank and $263,000 from tribal resources.

The $101,000 operating subsidy is provided by the Makah tribe and the tribe’s Indian Housing Block Grant,
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generated from carbon accountability funds. Traditionally, projects seeking funding through the trust fund have served the housing needs of our most vulnerable populations (youth/young adult, veterans, disabled, farm workers) and that trend would most likely continue. An additional $5 million would be used for the Trust Fund Portfolio Preservation Program.

The Budget Matters Conference also featured great sessions about Race and Equality, looking at historically underrepresented populations and the systematic barriers that keep them from full participation in our democracy. Conference attendees recognized the importance of connecting people with their elected officials and are looking forward to bringing a wide diversity of their constituents and residents to the Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day at the state capitol on Feb. 17th.

The conference ended with a session that looked at the Two Generation Focus on policy formation and implementation. This concept is especially important this year as we look to balance the budget and satisfy McCleary. A Two Generation Focus looks at how policies affect not just children and not just parents but rather the whole family unit. Many policies and programs will focus only on one portion of the family nearly forgetting that the health of an individual is affected by the health and wellbeing of all its members. As we look forward in this session we do hope that the understanding of racial equity, the two generation focus, and an attempt to make the whole community healthy, will shape the policy decisions our legislators make.

Mercedes Elizalde is a Volunteer Program Coordinator with the Low Income Housing Institute. For more on the Revenue Coalition visit http://oureconomicfuture.org.
2015 NLIHC Housing Legislative Forum

The 2015 National Low Income Housing Coalition Housing Legislative Forum takes place from March 1-3 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. The 2015 NLIHC Housing Legislative Forum will feature a series of provocative plenary speakers and panel discussions on implementation of the Nation Housing Trust Fund, on other critical legislative priorities for 2015 and on the most recent research on low income housing and poverty. More information and registration at www.nlihc.org/conference.

2015 NCRC Annual Conference

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition Annual Conference is one of the nation’s largest gatherings of community nonprofits, policymakers, government officials, small businesses, banks, and academia, all coming together to create a just economy. The conference will take place March 25-28, 2015 at the Capitol Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. This year’s theme is “Creating a Just Economy.” More information and registration at www.ncrc.org/conference/

2015 Housing & Homelessness Advocacy Day

Tuesday, February 17, 2015 from 8:00am to 4:00pm, Olympia, Washington Join the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and advocates from across the state to tell elected officials that you support affordable housing, and programs to prevent and end homelessness. More info at http://wliha.org/housing-and-homelessness-advocacy-day

25th Annual WLIHA Conference on Ending Homelessness

The 2015 WLIHA conference will be held at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center on May 13 and 14, 2015. The 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. More info at http://wliha.org/conference

Urban Institute Releases Mortgage Mapping Tool

A new tool developed by the Urban Institute maps 12 years of data on more than 100 million mortgage origination throughout the U.S. by race and ethnicity, illustrating how the housing boom and bust affected borrowers of different backgrounds by metropolitan area. The tool is available at http://datatools.urban.org/