

# HB 2263 and Local Funds for Affordable Housing

+ 2016 Legislative Agenda Preview!





# The Housing Alliance

*Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy and affordable home in a community that thrives with opportunity.*



Note for people viewing these slides after the presentation: the issue one-pagers included are from **LAST YEAR**, and are included here as a reference.

# #1. Critical Safety Net Services

Housing & Essential Needs (HEN)

•  
Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD)

•  
SSI Facilitation

•  
Medical Care Services for elderly and low-income immigrants



These programs are springboards helping people bounce back, to survive, recover, and thrive.

#### Steve's\* Story

Steve is an army veteran who served during the Gulf War. He enrolled in the HEN program in January 2013. By then he had been homeless outside and in shelters for two years. On top of many serious physical health issues, he was also experiencing depression and anxiety, which were becoming more acute due to chronic homelessness. Through teamwork with Steve's housing case manager and the HEN program staff, he was enrolled in a special veterans supportive housing program. After six months, he was able to move into a subsidized Bellingham Housing Authority apartment. The HEN program was able to pay for his security deposit.



Thanks to his new home, Steve quickly got back into painting, which he finds therapeutic &

just recently showed his pieces in Downtown Bellingham's monthly Art Walk. A few months after Steve moved into his own apartment he was approved for Supplemental Income (SSI) benefits & was able to take over his own rental payments.

\*Name changed to protect his anonymity.

#### Shelby's Story

"[W]hile I was in school, I suffered a terrible head injury, which led to seizures. I was later diagnosed with schizophrenia. [H]aving ABD meant I could take care of the basics. I used my ABD \$197 cash grant for rent, bus fare, cleaning supplies, & other personal necessities. I'm lucky I lived in an affordable building or would very likely be homeless. I know there are lots of others who don't have the chance to live in affordable housing – the cash grant is probably even more critical for them than it is for me."



Updated 1/2/2015

## Protect Washington's Lifeline for Disabled & Elderly Adults

Save from Elimination the Housing & Essential Needs Program; the Aged, Blind & Disabled Program; and SSI Facilitation Services

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: #HEN2015

### A disability shouldn't cause homelessness.

Over 200,000 people live with disabilities and low incomes in Washington. Many struggle to keep their home and afford their basic needs. Some of these individuals have children in school depending on their stable job. Unfortunately for thousands of Washington families & individuals, a disability can often lead to homelessness.

### HEN, ABD, & SSI Facilitation Services provide critical support to elderly and disabled adults.

- The state's Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) program ensures that people with temporary mental illnesses or temporary physical disabilities can meet their basic needs and keep their home when facing extreme economic hardship. The program provides rental and utility assistance. And recipients have access to essential basic needs, including transportation assistance & health/hygiene items.
- The Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD) program helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental health illnesses or permanent physical disabilities by providing cash assistance of up to \$197/month while they apply to the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. When people transition to SSI, the state is retroactively reimbursed for the full cost of the ABD cash grant. ABD also provides support to low-income elderly and disabled documented immigrants not yet eligible for federal medical and income support benefits.
- SSI Facilitation Services, funded by the state Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS), assists disabled individuals through the lengthy and complicated process of applying for federal SSI benefits. This process can take many years.

### We must expand, not decrease opportunities for people with disabilities and seniors.

- Department of Commerce proposed cutting HEN by 13.1% (\$7.4 million). This will cause 580 disabled people to lose their housing assistance and become homeless.
- DSHS proposed eliminating the ABD cash grant (23,449 permanently disabled & extremely low-income single adults). And they proposed transferring ABD recipients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to HEN. This would cause the number of people potentially eligible for HEN to increase from 7,303 to 30,752 per month.
- DSHS has proposed eliminating SSI Facilitation Services. This will strain state and local safety net resources and crisis services as thousands of disabled, low-income, and homeless adults are left with no resources to survive.

### Commerce included the following language in its proposal to cut HEN:

*"If this proposal is adopted, approximately 580 additional people will be living unsheltered. Some of these 580 unserved people may become hospitalized and some may die of exposure."*

### What is the legislative solution?

Maintain HEN, ABD, and SSI Facilitation Services at their current funding levels.

## What are they?

- HEN ensures that people with temporary mental or physical disabilities can meet their basic needs and access stable housing when facing extreme economic hardship.
- ABD helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental or physical disabilities by providing \$197 per month while they're applying for federal Supplemental Security Income.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Facilitation Services help permanently disabled ABD recipients navigate the arduous application process for receiving federal disability benefits.
- Medical Care Services provide medical coverage for ABD recipients whose don't qualify for Medicaid due to their citizenship status.

## What are our proposed legislative goals?

- Protect from cuts of negative policy changes
- Convene a stakeholder group to examine feasibility and timeline for improving programs and expanding access and coverage

# #2. Medicaid Supportive Housing Services Benefit

## Supportive housing improves health & saves community resources.

### Improved Health Outcomes

- A Denver study<sup>1</sup> found 50% of tenants in supportive housing experienced an improved health status and 43% had better mental health outcomes.
- Both a San Francisco<sup>2</sup> & a Chicago<sup>3</sup> supportive housing project had significantly higher survival rates compared to a control group.

### Cost-savings to the Public

- A three-year study<sup>4</sup> of a DESC supportive housing development in Seattle showed that the program saved taxpayers more than \$4 million for just the first year. The study also reported an average cost-savings of nearly \$2,500/month per person, compared to the costs of a wait-list control group.



DESC's Canaday House is a national leader in supportive housing.

### Reductions in Emergency Services

- That same Chicago program mentioned above found that an intervention group of about 200 homeless individuals who were provided housing & case management services used 24% less emergency services than a randomized control group over an 18-month period.

### Decreases in Inpatient Admissions & Hospital Stays

- Another Chicago study<sup>5</sup> saw 29% fewer hospital admissions & hospital days for the intervention group compared to the control.

Updated 1/2/2015

Special thanks to CSH: [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)

## Help End Chronic Homelessness by Creating a Medicaid Supportive Housing Services Benefit

Ensure that services for people living in supportive housing can be paid for with Medicaid

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: #Medicaid2015

### Homelessness & housing instability is harmful to people's health.

Housing instability and homelessness exacerbate health problems and too often prevent individuals from accessing the health services they need to recover. At the same time, ill health can lead to homelessness and housing instability. Providing housing and services to people living with complex and chronic health problems will allow them to stay off the street and in a healthy home. **Supportive housing is an evidence-based solution that helps people experiencing homelessness attain both housing stability and improved health outcomes.**

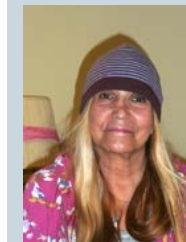
### What is Supportive Housing?

Supportive housing is an affordable home combined with comprehensive primary and behavioral health services. This research-proven model reduces utilization of costly emergency, inpatient, and crisis services, while improving health outcomes. **Affordable housing with resident services is not supportive housing. Supportive housing provides a more specialized level of care.** People living in supportive housing usually have a long history of homelessness and often face persistent obstacles to keeping their home, such as a serious mental health illness, chemical dependency, physical disability, or chronic medical condition.

### Medicaid expansion can help end homelessness.

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, many chronically homeless adults, including those residing in supportive housing, were not eligible for Medicaid or had barriers in applying. **Nearly all homeless persons are, by virtue of their incomes, eligible for Medicaid, including ones already living in supportive housing.**

If a Medicaid Supportive Housing Services Benefit was created, then supportive housing providers could bill Medicaid for supportive services provided to eligible residents. This would allow more chronically homeless people to access services, improve the integration of behavioral & health care, and would help individuals with severe and chronic health issues stay off the street and live in a healthy home.



Diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia & bipolar disorder, Margaret lived a "very rough life of homelessness" for 20 years. In December 2014, Margaret celebrated one year of living safely off the streets and in DESC's permanent supportive housing development Cottage Grove Commons. Margaret's story is also a success for taxpayers. Instead of frequently utilizing expensive emergency services living on the streets, she can access lower-cost regular services at Cottage Grove Commons.

### What is the legislative solution?

**Medicaid can and should pay for supportive housing services. The state needs to take action to request this amendment to the state's Medicaid plan and make a modest investment of state Medicaid dollars.**

<sup>1</sup> J. Perlman & J. Parvinsky. Denver Housing First Collaborative Cost Benefit Analysis & Program Outcomes Report. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, December 2006.

<sup>2</sup> T. Martinez & M. Burt. "Impact of Permanent Supportive Housing on the Use of Acute Care Health Services by Homeless Adults." Psychiatric Services, July 2006, Vol. 57, No.7.

<sup>3</sup> L. Sadowski, R. Kee, T. VanderWeele, & D. Buchanan. "Effect of a Housing & Case Management Program on Emergency Department Visits & Hospitalizations among Chronically Ill Homeless Adults." Journal of the American Medical Association, May 6, 2009, pp. 1771-1778.

<sup>4</sup> S. Collins, D. Malone, & S. Clifasefi. "Housing Retention in Single-Site Housing First for Chronically Homeless Individuals With Severe Alcohol Problems." American Journal of Public Health, December 2013, Vol. 103, No. S2.

<sup>5</sup> K. Linkins, J. Brya, & D. Chandler. Frequent Users of Health Services Initiative: Final Evaluation Report. Lewin Group, August 2008.



## **What is it?**

- Supportive housing combines affordable housing with access to comprehensive primary and behavioral health services
- This model serves people who need services in order to succeed in housing, and who need housing in order to access and succeed in services - primarily people who have very significant barriers

## **What's the proposed goal?**

- Washington State has submitted a request to the federal government asking to amend our state's Medicaid contract to enable Medicaid to be used to pay for the tenancy and housing-related services that delivered in Permanent Supportive Housing

## **Urgent - take action now!**

- Organizations should write letters urging the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to accept this proposal during the public comment period, which ends on October 9. Contact [KateB@wliha.org](mailto:KateB@wliha.org) for more information. She's hosting a phone call briefing on this tomorrow, so contact her ASAP.

**The lack of a portable tenant screening report standard is a real obstacle to a home.**

**Thomas's Story**



"I was living in a homeless shelter in Tacoma and was trying to find a rental apartment. I

had budgeted enough money for the average studio apartment in Tacoma, including first and last rent, a deposit, and at least three tenant screening reports, at roughly \$35 each. **My transition from shelter to home took three more months than I expected.**

I had to keep paying for repeat tenant screening reports that various landlords requested during my search. **After I ran out of money paying for the reports, I had to stop my search until the next paycheck.** If I could've purchased just one standard report that all landlords had to accept, then I could have applied to more places and moved into my new apartment much sooner.

And had I been able to leave the shelter sooner, I could've saved the City of Tacoma money and opened up space for someone whose situation was worse than mine."

**A portable report will be easier and more efficient for landlords too.**

**Tim Seth, President of the Washington Landlord Association**

"The majority of Washington landlords do not operate out of sophisticated management offices, or other large-scale operations. As such, many landlords would find the consequence of [the Fair Tenant Screening Act] more timely in the pick-and-shovel business of selecting tenants (by not always having to take the additional time to wait for the filling out of new applications, then to submit & wait more for a completely new screen)."

Updated 1/2/2015

## **Make Tenant Screening Report Costs Fair & Affordable for All Renters**

**Pass the Fair Tenant Screening Act**

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: #FTSA2015

### **Portable tenant screening reports just make sense.**

If you've ever repeatedly paid for the same costly tenant screening report in the search for a home, then you'll understand the need for this legislation. The average renter will have to pay for three or more tenant screening reports when they are trying to find a new home.

Seattle-based organization Solid Ground surveyed tenants who used their programs. **They found these tenants spent on average \$166 for repeat screening reports during a single housing search.** These screening fees can become a significant moving cost, especially for families on limited incomes, already burdened with a deposit and first month's rent. And for what? One tenant screening report has virtually the same information as the other reports. **Wouldn't it be more efficient and practical to buy just one online report and provide the log-in information to all the landlords requesting this data?** This legislation aims to do just that.

### **How might a portable tenant screening report work?**

1. A renter buys a standard online tenant screening report that meets the legal definition of a current and comprehensive report.
2. When this renter provides access to this secure, online report to landlords, they should not be able to charge this prospective tenant for another report.
3. Landlords will still be free to use their own tenant screening company, but they won't be able to charge the tenant for this cost.

### **Tenants and landlords benefit.**

This legislation will be beneficial to all renters and property owners in Washington. The current state of tenant screening reports is particularly harmful to low-income renters who are already cost-burdened with security deposits and first and last month's rent. And more landlords will be provided with a comprehensive screening report, giving them the information they need to make a solid rental decision.

### **What is in a comprehensive report?**

A comprehensive report should be current, meaning that it has been created within the last 30 days, and it should include the same information that standard comprehensive reports on the market currently contain.

Advocates will work with stakeholders, including landlords, to define a current and comprehensive report. One possibility is that landlords could access these reports through a secure online portal using a tenant screening company-generated password. These reports would only be valid for one month after purchase.

### **Why the rental housing lobby hates this legislation.**

The Rental Housing Association of Washington is the state's largest and most powerful lobbying group for landlords. They are also a "full service tenant screening and credit reporting company," which is a source of revenue. RHA receives much more money when a tenant searching for a home has to pay multiple times for the same report, rather than only paying once. RHA might claim they are lobbying to protect information contained on screening reports. But really, it's about their bottom line.

### **What is the legislative ask?**

**Pass the Fair Tenant Screening Act to make the tenant screening process more affordable and fair for both tenants and landlords.**

# **#3. Fair Tenant Screening Act (FTSA)**



## **What is it?**

- In a home search, renters usually pay for a tenant screening report as part of the application process.
- Although the information in each report is virtually identical, tenants have to pay for the brand new report to accompany every application submitted.
- This adds a significant cost that's an unnecessary hardship for families on limited incomes and a hurdle that can increase the amount of time people and families spend homeless.

## **What is the proposed legislative goal?**

- Pass legislation to ensure that if an applicant can supply a landlord with a secure, current, & comprehensive tenant screening report, the landlord would not be able to charge the tenant for a new report.

# #4. Truth in Evictions Reporting (TIER)



## Proven Innocent, Reported Guilty: Make Tenant Screening Reports Accurate for All Renters

### Pass the Truth in Evictions Reporting Act

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: #TIER2015

#### The way evictions are currently reported just doesn't make any sense.

If a company is creating a tenant report about you, it should be accurate and should fairly represent your renter history. Currently, when a tenant is named in an eviction lawsuit, tenant screening companies merely state you were involved, and that's it—they don't have to explain the circumstances or the ruling outcome. The eviction could've been thrown out or the court could've ruled in favor of the tenant. But, none of this really matters because tenant reports list all eviction lawsuits as equal, even when the tenant wins. No matter the outcome, tenants have a mark on their record.

#### Many tenants are seen as "guilty," even when they're "innocent."

Even when eviction lawsuits are unfair, erroneous, or ruled in the renter's favor, the tenant is still stuck with the "Do Not Rent To" label. Thus, the concept of "innocent until proven guilty" doesn't apply to these tenants. Once companies mark your record, it will appear to all future landlords that you were guilty, even if you proved yourself innocent in court. Many good renters have their names blacklisted by tenant screening reports simply because a landlord filed a suit against them. Outcomes where the tenant won or where the case was thrown out shouldn't limit a tenant's ability to find housing in the future.

#### Even If Tenants Win, They Lose

Approximately one-third of all unlawful detainer (a.k.a. eviction) filings in Washington do not result in a writ of restitution—the legal document empowering law enforcement to evict a tenant. Yet, these filings are included on tenants' screening reports and are then used as grounds to deny housing.

#### A Scarlet Letter

When a tenant has an eviction record, it amounts to a Scarlet Letter because no matter the outcomes or circumstances, tenants are branded as a problem and many landlords refuse to even consider renting to a tenant with an eviction. This "Scarlet Eviction Letter" will remain on tenants' screening reports and complicate their access to future housing.

#### What is the legislative ask?

Pass the Truth in Evictions Reporting Act to make the tenant screening process more affordable and fair for both tenants and landlords.

Updated 1/2/2015

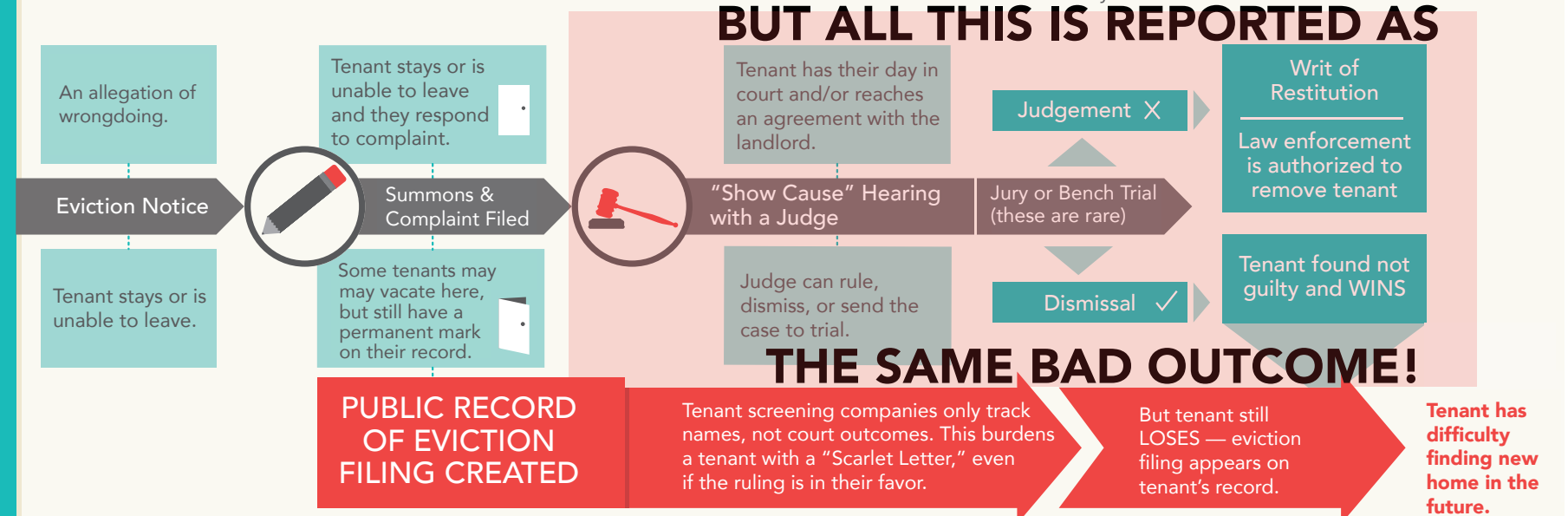
## WHEN WINNING IS LOSING

### Why We Need to Reform Tenant Screening Practices

The U.S. justice system guarantees that every American will be considered innocent until proven guilty. Yet when a landlord files an eviction lawsuit against a renter, that renter's record is blemished — no matter the suit's outcome. Learn how improving tenant screening report standards will protect the basic rights of Washington renters.

## THE LIFETIME OF AN EVICTION FILING

When an eviction a.k.a. "unlawful detainer" is filed with the courts, it begins as an unsubstantiated allegation. The lawsuit can have many outcomes. But if the case is dismissed, the eviction ends as an unsubstantiated allegation. The process also creates a paper trail. Tenant screening reports typically list the existence of this paper trail to landlords without any context or even any information on the ruling. This paper trail alone becomes a "Scarlet Letter" that a tenant carries with them even when they have won.



## **What is it?**

- Tenant screening companies report all eviction lawsuits as equal, even lawsuits that have been settled to the landlord's satisfaction or when the tenant has won in court.
- Eviction court has many different outcomes: a tenant could have been wrongfully named or could have been a victim of their landlord's foreclosure, or could have won. But tenant reports list all eviction lawsuits as equal.
- No matter the outcome, tenants have an "eviction mark" on their record.

## **What is the legislative goal?**

- Ensure that tenant screening reports accurately report actual evictions.



# #5. Source of Income Discrimination (SOID) Protections



## This discrimination prevents economic & housing mobility.

When landlords refuse to rent to housing subsidy holders, this decreases choices for tenants on public assistance & dashes their hopes of escaping low-opportunity neighborhoods. This practice also clusters low-income communities, making it difficult for them to break cycles of poverty.

### These laws work.

Martha Galvez's 2011 study, *"Defining Choice in the Housing Choice Voucher Program..."* found that households on public assistance were unevenly distributed in a manner similar to black residential segregation. **Also average neighborhood poverty rates for voucher holders were lower in areas with source of income discrimination laws in place.**

### Spotlight on Clark County

"Something like 300 households in Clark County, including 90 families with children, qualified for private-market rental vouchers in the year after the new Housing Solutions Center opened its doors in March 2013 — but then couldn't find a landlord who'd accept them."

Housing Solutions Center in Vancouver found that "...even with vouchers in hand, only 56 percent of households found a landlord willing to rent to them."

*The Columbian*, July 27, 2014

## Cities & municipalities across Washington already protect these vulnerable tenants.

- Bellevue
- Kirkland
- Redmond
- King County
- Seattle

Including these states:

California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Updated 1/2/2015

## Provide Choice & Mobility for Renters: Outlaw Discrimination

Landlords shouldn't be allowed to discriminate against renters who pay with housing subsidies.

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: [#SOID2015](#)

## How you pay for your home shouldn't prevent you from having one.

In a home search, many vulnerable individuals and families face discrimination by landlords unwilling to rent to Housing Choice (Section 8) voucher holders. Also, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities receiving other legal sources of income (e.g. government and nonprofit subsidies) face similar discrimination.

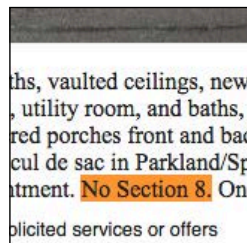
Already, several municipalities in Washington and many states have adopted laws prohibiting housing discrimination based on source of income (see sidebar). These protections are crucial to maximizing a family's ability to secure a safe and healthy home when paying with a housing subsidy or other legal sources of income other than those from current employment.

## Discriminating against tenants who pay with a subsidy further harms already vulnerable people.

In most of Washington, landlords can and often do refuse to rent to people with Section 8 vouchers. Whatever their reasons, this ultimately results in huge disparities. **Veterans, people with disabilities, & seniors on public assistance often face much longer home searches or are unable to find an appropriate home at all.**

## Discriminating against tenants who pay with housing vouchers is often a cover-up for racial discrimination.

Source of income discrimination disproportionately affects African American communities. Both federal & local policies over time have led to huge racial disparities in African American communities, preventing opportunities for economic mobility and safe, healthy, affordable homes. Thus, a disproportionately high percentage of voucher recipients are African American. In many cities, discrimination against Section 8 vouchers is often a cover up for discrimination on basis of race. **This discrimination is also a loophole in the nation's fair housing law that prohibits housing discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, etc.**



Screenshot of a Craigslist ad for a rental home in Tacoma taken on 10/10/14.



The new owner of Jon and Kelly Penfold's rental home started investigating his tenants' finances. When he discovered Jon was using a HOPWA Voucher to help pay rent, he tried to make them move out, despite Jon & Kelly always paying their rent on time. Jon described the full kitchen as very important to maintaining his health. After continued harassment from the landlord, Jon and Kelly felt they had no

## What is the legislative solution?

**Pass legislation to prevent landlords from denying tenancy based solely on the grounds of the tenant relying on a subsidy or "public subsidy" (e.g. Housing Choice voucher, SSI, etc.) to pay all or a portion of their rent.**

Landlords could still reject tenants who do not have enough income/resources to meet the monthly rental payment and could still deny tenancy on legal grounds equally applied to all applicants.

## **What is it?**

- In many communities in Washington, it's still legal for landlords to deny renting to Housing Choice (Section 8) voucher holders, seniors relying on social security income, veterans using housing subsidies, and people with disabilities who receive other legal sources of income.
- This discrimination has a significant impact on communities who disproportionately need to rely on housing subsidies to make ends meet: households of color, seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and single-parent headed households with young children.

## **What is the legislative goal?**

- Pass legislation to prevent landlords from categorically denying housing to all tenants relying on a lawful housing subsidy or lawful income supports to help pay the rent.

# #6. Ninety Day Notice and Tenant Relocation Assistance Improvement

## What is it?

- Would allow local jurisdictions to require up to 90 days written notice for a change in rent that is greater than 10%.
- Would allow local jurisdictions to require property owners to provide reasonable relocation assistance to tenants whose income is at or below 80% of the area median income (currently the cap is 50% AMI).
- Would allow a local jurisdiction to provide renter relocation assistance for a tenant retroactively if the property owner is later discovered to be in violation of the requirements after the tenant has moved out.



# #7. Funding for Affordable Housing

Supplemental Capital Budget appropriation to the Housing Trust Fund



Creation of a Real Estate Excise Tax option for local jurisdictions

## A home leads to positive health outcomes for kids

- National Center on Family Homelessness: homeless children are sick 4x more often than housed children.
- A study in the journal *Pediatrics* found that homeless children have frequent respiratory and ear infections, stomach conditions, and high rates of asthma.
- That same study found that 27.9% of children without a stable home suffered from asthma rates 3x the national average.

## Leaving families & children behind damages the economy

- The average net benefit to taxpayers for each student who graduates from high school rather than drops out is \$200,000.
- The cost to taxpayers if homeless students not proficient in math fail to graduate: \$3.4 billion.

## Building & preserving affordable homes has other economic benefits.

Every 1,000 apartments developed with capital budget dollars creates 1,220 jobs & generates \$79 million in local income. This includes the direct and indirect impact of construction activity, as well as the ripple effect of that income spent on other locally produced goods and services.

## A home: the key to a new life



When Scott (pictured right) returned from serving 8 years in the Army, he experienced daily stressors, which made it difficult for him to function. So his family started in transitional housing in Yakima, a home made possible thanks to a Washington State capital fund investment in affordable housing. Today, he's in a WorkFirst job training program learning new skills to maintain full time employment. He and his family now live in a safe, healthy, affordable permanent home.

Updated 1/6/2015

## Build Healthy Communities by Investing in Affordable Homes

Access to a stable home improves health & education outcomes

Track our advocacy on these issues on Twitter using this hashtag: #HTF2015

## All Washington residents deserve an opportunity to live in a healthy home.

- More than 30,000 homeless children attended Washington public schools in 2013.
- During a three-hour period in January 2014, volunteers counted 6,289 homeless people living in the cold without shelter across the state.
- About 166,000 of the poorest Washington households are spending more than half their income for rent.

## How Washington can help shrink the state's affordable housing gap.

Building affordable homes can be challenging in communities across Washington. The private, for-profit housing market builds market-rate developments with rents out of reach for lower income families and individuals. The legislature eases the field by creating safe, healthy, and affordable homes through the capital budget.

These capital budget funds (aka the Housing Trust Fund) are used to build and preserve affordable homes across Washington. HTF is a critical funding component to assemble the dollars needed to build & preserve affordable homes.

## Whom does it house?

The vast majority of people living in homes built or preserved by the HTF are extremely low-income, **earning less than \$19,000 per year for a family of three**. HTF has also funded **first-time homeownership programs**, and homes for vulnerable communities, such as **veterans, people with disabilities, and seniors**.

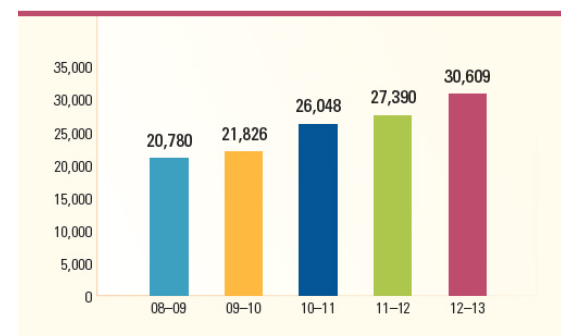
## Housing is a racial equity issue.

Both federal & local policies over time have led to huge racial disparities, preventing opportunities to safe, healthy, affordable homes. African Americans make up a little more than 7% of Seattle's population. But that demographic is tripled for the homeless population. The statistics are worse nationwide, as African Americans make up roughly 13.1% of the population, but 37% of the homeless population. The capital budget is an opportunity to bridge the racial housing gap.

## What is the legislative solution?

Invest at least \$100 million to build and preserve safe, healthy, affordable housing.

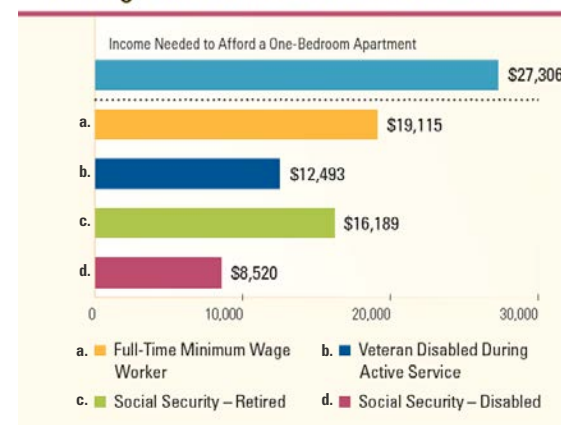
Homeless Schoolchildren



The population of homeless schoolchildren in Washington State has increased steadily (see above).

Across Washington, renting a home is out of reach for too many (see below).

Renting a Stretch for Low-Income Households



# Real Estate Excise Tax

## **What is it?**

- An excise tax constituting a percentage of the value of a property that is imposed any time that a property is conveyed to another owner
- Included as one of the main state-level recommendations from the City of Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA)
- REETs have been used to fund affordable housing in the past. Local governments already have the structure in place to implement the tax.

# HB 2263:

## Local option for a sales tax to fund affordable housing & mental health



### What is it?

- HB 2263, passed earlier this year, created an option for local communities to implement a new 1/10 of 1% sales tax for affordable housing, mental health facilities, operations and maintenance, and services.
- Enactment requires voter approval
- Counties get a head start to enact. If they don't, cities can pass the tax in 2 years (outside of King) or 3 years (inside of King)



# How much would a 1/10th of 1% sales tax raise in your community?

This option is similar to the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency tax (MIDD), implemented in 2005. In 2014, the MIDD generated \$96.6 million statewide.

County	2014 year to date	County	2014 year to date
Clallam County	\$947,237.48	Okanogan County	\$586,367.30
Clark County	\$5,505,345.21	Tacoma	\$4,143,007.84
Columbia County	\$415,209.62	San Juan County	\$400,723.91
Cowlitz County	\$1,554,969.52	Skagit County	\$2,270,533.87
Ferry County	\$70,276.44	Skamania County	\$99,841.31
Grays Harbor County	\$859,657.77	Snohomish County	\$11,425,457.28
Island County	\$765,405.39	Spokane County	\$7,799,996.60
Jefferson County	\$374,327.93	Thurston County	\$3,971,291.49
King County	\$46,946,604.52	Wahkiakum County	\$34,020.15
Kitsap County	\$2,675,034.73	Walla Walla County	\$805,155.48
Lewis County	\$1,104,495.88	Whatcom County	\$3,396,408.86
Mason County	\$530,388.95	State Administrative Fee	\$971,418.20
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$96,681,757.53</b>

# How will all of these options play together?



The Rabbit Stew String Band, playing at a fundraiser for the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness last week

*(Photo courtesy of Ben Miksch)*

- A community can enact this AND a property tax housing levy (and should!)
- This doesn't take the place of the Mental Illness & Drug Dependency Tax, and jurisdictions can enact both (and should!)
- HB 2263 also gave communities new options for funding Cultural Access Programs, but other than having the same authorizing language these options are totally unrelated.

# (Funding Option Comparisons document)



# So then... how does a community decide what to prioritize???

**The big question for communities that are already organizing local funding campaigns: HB 2263 or traditional property tax levy?**

- Were you looking at a city-level effort or a county-level effort? If city-level, how does waiting 2 (or 3) years fit into your timeline?
- How much money would each proposal raise? Would one raise significantly more funding than the other?
- Are voters in your community more likely to support a sales tax increase than a property tax increase, or vice versa?
- Is the jurisdiction you're targeting at or near your property tax levy lid?
- Which set of AMI restrictions and allowable-funding uses would best fit the needs of your community?

# Instead of picking one, can we just mix them all together?

**I'm not a lawyer, but...** yeah, probably?

A single ordinance can be proposed to voters that combines different authorized taxes, so long as...

- The purpose of the two taxes is aligned
- The 75 word ballot title is written broadly enough to encompass both purposes and the authorization of both

Bellingham's housing levy combined both property tax options, and Seattle's did as well.

An option to consider may be combining a property tax levy for affordable housing and this sales tax into a single ballot proposal.

**Be very careful** if your community is considering combining HB 2263's affordable housing/mental health component and the cultural access component into a single ballot proposal.



Reminder:  
Funding is  
just one of  
many  
possibilities!

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-86](http://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-86). The browser's tab is labeled "City Council Meeting | City X". The page content is organized into a sidebar on the left and a main content area on the right.

**Sidebar Content:**

- remembrance ceremony
- City survey shows transportation, parks, entertainment options as important priorities
- Escape the heat at City recreation, water education centers
- [View All News](#)
- Resource Center**
  - Forms
  - Documents
  - Services
  - Proclamations and Special Presentations
  - [View All Forms](#)

**Main Content Area:**

Action requested: Subject to second reading and public hearing, approve ordinance. (B  
City Attorney, 487-8500)

[Staff Report 134-15 \(PDF\)](#)

**6. Vulnerable Renter Protections Proposal: 60-Day Eviction Notice**

**AN ORDINANCE** relating to an affirmative defense for month-to-month tenants who are a 60-day notice, by landlords owning five (5) or more rental units, prior to the landlord's eviction action unless a different notice period is specifically authorized by law; providing severability and an effective date.

Action requested: Subject to second reading and public hearing, approve ordinance. (P  
Community Development Programs Manager, 487-7952)

[Staff Report 135A-15 \(PDF\)](#) | [Presentation Items 6-8 \(PDF\)](#)

**7. Vulnerable Renter Protections Proposal: 45-Day Notice of Rent Increase**

**AN ORDINANCE** relating to requiring that all rental agreements in the city of Vancouver provision requiring a minimum of forty-five (45) days prior written notice whenever the monthly housing costs to be charged a tenant is to increase by more than ten (10) percent for severability and an effective date.

Action requested: Subject to second reading and public hearing, approve ordinance. (P  
Community Development Programs Manager, 487-7952)

[Staff Report 136-15 \(PDF\)](#)

**8. Vulnerable Renter Protections Proposal: Source of Income Protection**

**AN ORDINANCE** relating to prohibiting landlords from refusing to rent a dwelling unit to based on their source of income; providing for severability and an effective date.

Action requested: Subject to second reading and public hearing, approve ordinance. (P  
Community Development Programs Manager, 487-7952)

[Staff Report 137A-15 \(PDF\)](#)

**Communications**

1. From the Council
2. From the Mayor
3. From the City Manager



# Lawyers? Polling? Campaign Managers?

## This is a lot to figure out!

**Yep, sure is. Luckily you have lots of support!**

- The Center for Community Change's Housing Trust Fund Project is one of the best resources around for figuring out how to run and win a local campaign <http://housingtrustfundproject.org/campaigns/>
- Michael Anderson, who runs it, provides direct assistance from speaking at your meetings to helping you draft the actual spending plan (*which you should get started on sooner, rather than later!*)
- The Housing Alliance is here to provide support as well! Keep us in the loop. Michele Thomas ([michele@wliha.org](mailto:michele@wliha.org)) is the best contact.

