



## Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day Talking Points & Messaging Guide

### STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES TALKING POINTS

#### Housing Trust Fund

- Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home.
- The Housing Trust Fund is Washington's best and primary tool for addressing the drastic shortage of affordable housing in our state.
- **Please support a Capital Budget that invests in the Housing Trust Fund at the highest level possible.**

#### Document Recording Fees

- Document recording fees are the largest source of funds for every county homelessness program in our state.
- These fees have made a huge difference. Since 2006, they've funded a 29% decrease in homelessness generally and a 74% decrease specifically in unsheltered family homelessness.
- Under current law, if document recording fees sunset, funding for homelessness will drop more than 60% by 2017, resulting in 32,000 fewer homeless people housed.
- **Please support HB 2368 / SB 6313 to prevent the sunset of the state's document recording fees.**

#### Fair Tenant Screening Act , Part 3

- When someone rents an apartment, they usually have to pay for a tenant screening report as part of that application.
- 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.
- This proposal would ensure that if an applicant can supply a landlord with a secure, current, and comprehensive tenant screening report, the landlord would not be able to charge the tenant for a new report.
- **Pass HB 2537 / SB 6291 to address the high costs of unnecessary duplicate tenant screening reports and give people more opportunities to afford a place to call home**

#### Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) and Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD) Programs

- 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.
- These programs are springboards that help real people bounce back, survive, recover, and thrive.
- **Protect HEN and ABD from any new budget cuts.**

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## MESSAGING GUIDE

A lot of important issues are at stake this year. Using the Housing Trust Fund as an example, this guide will walk you through how to build a powerful advocacy message for any issue.

### Use a Value, Problem, and Solution Frame

#### Value

The value explains your vision for the community, state, and society. It should be the purpose and goal that underpins why we need the proposed solution.

Example: *“Children deserve a chance to succeed in school and in life, which all begins with their families being able to afford a decent place to live.”*

#### Problem

This is a clear statement of the problem we are trying to fix, described in a way that everyone can relate to.

Example: *“In the 2011-2012 school year, more than 27,000 students were counted as experiencing homelessness in Washington State. Students experiencing homelessness have drastically reduced proficiency scores on math, reading, and science.”*

#### Solution

Every message should be tied to the solution we are proposing, as well as the values and outcomes it would accomplish.

Example: *“Invest in the Housing Trust Fund and create quality, affordable homes that can serve as a stable foundation for students to build success and ensure every child in Washington can reach their full potential.”*

## Effective Homeless and Housing Messaging

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance used focus groups and a statewide survey to identify several value messages that resonate with people in our state. By framing affordable housing issues in terms of closely held values, these messages can build support for our work.

- **Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home.**
- **It should be possible for working people to afford a home and still have enough left over for the basics like groceries and gas and childcare.**
- **Children deserve a chance to succeed in school and in life, which all begins with their families being able to afford a decent place to live.**
- **It's better for society, the environment, and families if people can afford to live close to where they work.**