**Tacoma mayor to address record-breaking crowd at this week’s**

**25th Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness**

WLIHA logo_black

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**25th Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness**

Wednesday, May 13 to Thursday, May 14

Greater Tacoma Convention

& Trade Center

1500 Broadway

Tacoma, WA 98402

Complete list of workshops and workshop presenters: [wliha.org/coeh/program](http://www.wliha.org/coeh/program).

A version of this release can be found at: [wliha.org/press](http://wliha.org/press).

Our vision is that all Washington residents have the opportunity to live in

safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities.

Find out more about the Housing Alliance at our website: [wliha.org](http://www.wliha.org).May 11, 2015 **Contact: Joaquin (WAH keen) Uy (wee)**

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Over 820 participants, an unprecedented number in the conference’s 25 years, are registered to attend the 2015 Conference on Ending Homelessness from May 13-14, at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center.

Each year, the statewide advocacy coalition Washington Low Income Housing Alliance organizes this conference that alternates between eastern and western Washington. Conference hosts are also honored to have **Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland** start the conference off with the opening keynote address.

“We were absolutely amazed at the record-breaking attendance rates for this year’s gathering,” says conference organizer Kate Baber. “Based on the attendee list, it appears advocates, service providers, policy makers, and even legislators are extremely interested in new and innovative ways to solve the state’s worsening affordable housing crisis.”

Between 2013 and 2014, [Pierce County’s homelessness count rose nearly 7 percent](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2014-PIT-Summary.pdf). Pierce County is also currently experiencing an affordable housing shortage. According to the latest state Department of Commerce figures, **for every 100 households, Pierce County only has 29 homes available for people with very low incomes**. Additionally, the Tacoma School District identified [1,760 homeless students in the 2013-14 school year](http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2015documents/HomelessStudentsJan2015.pdf).

Statewide, homelessness numbers appear to be no better. Last year, in January [18,839 people were found to be without a stable home in Washington State](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2014-PIT-Summary.pdf), a 6 percent increase from the previous year. Many officials are predicting a statewide increase for this year. In addition, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction released figures earlier this year revealing [32,494 homeless students for the 2013-2014 school year](http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/Data.aspx) across the entire state.

The conference features workshops about the latest policy and services innovations to end homelessness and several notable speakers and panelists:

* **Rosette Royale**, [Former Real Change News Editor](http://rosetteroyale.com)
* **Nicole Macri**, [Director of Housing Programs, DESC](http://www.desc.org)
* **Jane Beyer**, [Assistant Secretary, Behavioral Health & Service Integration Administration of DSHS](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bhsia)
* **Andi Smith**, [Senior Human Services Policy Advisor, Governor Jay Inslee’s Legislative & Policy Office](http://www.governor.wa.gov/office-governor/office)
* **Dorothy Teeter**, [Director, Washington State Health Care Authority](http://www.hca.wa.gov/Pages/index.aspx)

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance is a statewide member organization leading the movement for creating affordable homes and ending homelessness. We utilize advocacy, education, and organizing to achieve our vision that all Washington residents have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities. ###

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