

National report shows rental homes continue to remain “Out of Reach” for minimum wage earners in Washington State



Contact: Joaquin Uy
cell: 206.427.2999
joaquin@wliha.org

wliha.org
facebook.com/wliha
twitter.com/wliha



Contact: Sarah Brundage
office: 202.662.1530 x246
sarah@nlihc.org

nlihc.org/
facebook.com/nlihc
twitter.com/nlihc

NLIHC's **National Press Release** can be found here:
nlihc.org/press/releases/4214.

Learn more about Washington State's **Housing Trust Fund**:
wliha.org/advocacy/state#HTF.

Learn more about the **National Housing Trust Fund** and the **United for Homes Campaign**:
nlihc.org/unitedforhomes.

The full **Out of Reach 2014 Report** is at: nlihc.org/oor/2014.

Compare this year's housing affordability data to numbers released each year since 2005 here: nlihc.org/oor.

March 24, 2014

Contact: Joaquin (WAH keen) Uy (wee)
206.427.2999 (text or call), joaquin@wliha.org

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SEATTLE – If you make minimum wage in Washington State, you'll need to work 54 hours/week to afford a decent studio apartment.

This is one of many findings from the 2014 Out of Reach Report, jointly released by the **National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)** and **Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (Housing Alliance)** today, March 24.

NLIHC is a national research and advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. and the Housing Alliance is a statewide housing advocacy group. The report provides housing affordability data for every state, metropolitan area, and county, including the unique Housing Wage statistic. **The Housing Wage is the hourly wage a household must earn, working 40 hours a week, to afford the rent and utilities for a safe, modest home in the private housing market.** (HUD considers someone as rent-burdened if they are paying more than 30% of their income on housing.) For example, in the City of Spokane, the Housing Wage for a renter needing a one-bedroom (1-br) rental home is \$10.50, above the state's minimum wage of \$9.32.

The report also contains data on each of the state's counties, major metropolitan areas, statewide, and nationwide stats. For instance, while a single-renter household making minimum wage would have to work **58 hours/week to afford the Fair Market Rent (FMR) of studio apartment in Olympia, this same minimum wage earner would have to work 64 hours/week to afford that same home in Seattle.** Out of Reach 2014 finds that in no state can a full-time minimum wage worker afford a one-bedroom or a two-bedroom rental unit at FMR.

“We fully support increased wages, as well as improving the tax code to be fairer. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour would benefit millions of low income Americans. However, it unfortunately would be an insufficient response to America's housing affordability crisis,” said **NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley**. “Increasing the stock of affordable housing is a critical part to addressing the extreme shortage of affordable housing in America.”

The Housing Alliance believes all Washington residents should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home. However, as Out of Reach 2014 reveals, thousands of families and individuals have to choose between paying for a roof over their heads or paying for other basic needs like food, medicine, or childcare. Washington State is one of only nine states that has a **Housing Trust Fund (HTF)**, which helps build and preserve affordable homes. Unfortunately, the state legislature did not make an investment in the HTF this session.

“This was the first time since 1996 that the state legislature was unable to pass a capital budget,” says **Housing Alliance Executive Director Rachael Myers**. “And the capital budget has traditionally been the vehicle for the state to make other investments in affordable homes across the state. This lack of funding means a missed opportunity to for alleviating the state's growing affordable housing gap.”

The Housing Alliance will be working to ensure elected officials make an appropriate investment in the Housing Trust Fund in the next legislative session.
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