**Housing Alliance**

**Requests for Consideration**

**2015 Housing Opportunity Agenda**

Lead:

* Prevent and end homelessness by allocating **$10 million to the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)**. This is our most flexible resource to end and prevent homelessness. This resource has seen several cuts in recent years, while the need is growing at an alarming pace. EHA and SHAP help keep families in their homes, and help families experiencing homelessness get into stable housing.
* Across the state, thousands of people with very low incomes live in homes with federal rent subsidies and in manufactured home parks. Many of these homes are at risk of conversion to market rate, including some housing built and owned by non-profit partners statewide. We cannot afford to lose this precious resource or displace our vulnerable neighbors. We need **$20 million additional funding in Lottery Backed Bonds to fill financing gaps and preserve these affordable homes**.
* We need to continue to work to restore Oregon’s housing market by dedicating **additional resources to ensure the continued success of the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance (OFA) Program**. Homeowners rely on this critical system for essential information, counseling, legal support, mediation services and direct financial relief.
* **Expand the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit (OAHTC).** The OAHTC is a state tax credit that directly benefits residents with low incomes and resident owners of manufactured home parks by reducing mortgage interest rates.
* **Support Governor’s request for $100 million in bonds,** which will be targeted primarily to provide increased housing inventory for homeless families with children. (Pending final Housing Alliance membership vote)
* **Develop a “housing lens” in state government** by funding staff capacity at Oregon Housing and Community Services to help ensure that local communities meet local housing needs. (Pending Housing Alliance workgroup and membership consensus)
* **Refer a constitutional amendment to allow expanded use of General Obligation bond** authority to fund affordable housing for non-elderly and non-disabled populations with low incomes. Currently the Oregon Constitution allows GO bonds used for housing elderly and disabled residents with low incomes.

Support:

* **Update and Technical Fix to Farmworker Housing Statutes.** The statute requires certification by OR-OSHA and the Fire Marshal in order for housing to be eligible for the tax exemption. These requirements have the valid purpose of ensuring basic safety levels for on-farm housing, but no longer satisfy that purpose for newer community-based farmworker housing. The eligibility requirements of the statute need updating to ensure applicability to current housing models.
* **Repeal preemption on Inclusionary Zoning**, a tool used to ensure new housing is developed for a range of incomes. This proposal would simply repeal the preemption on inclusionary zoning and allow communities to choose whether or not to have an inclusionary zoning policy as a tool development of affordable housing.
* **Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) Tax Credit Renewal and Expansion** The Oregon IDA Initiative invests in the personal and financial growth of individuals to build strong communities throughout Oregon. The tax credit for donations to the initiatives is set to expire in 2016. We need to renew the tax credit to continue this investment in families and communities, and expand the allowable uses of matched savings.
* **Rename State Housing Council to “Housing Commission” and give Commission a strong and effective role in setting state housing policy** and ensure that the Commission and OHCS fulfill existing provisions of the statutes related to housing policy development and planning.
* Provide a **1-year notice to residents of Rural Development mortgage maturity**
* Pass the **“Right to Rest Act,”** which will help ensure that all people, regardless of their housing status, can safely use public spaces for basic needs like resting and eating.
* **Expand resources for cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields**, where sites are appropriate for use as affordable housing. (Pending Housing Alliance membership consensus)
* Designated funding source to provide **$12.5M in seed funding for asset leveraging program to Habitat for Humanity**.
* **Clarified language of ORS 307.130** that will once again enable non-profit homeownership developers serving households earning up to 80% of the area median income to hold this property tax-free, thereby freeing up approximately $250,000 annually to actually build and repair homes.
* **Allow property tax exemption be granted based upon the income certification at the time of initial occupancy.**  This would not only address the direct situation of a household improving their condition and going above 60% median income but also eliminate a burdensome paperwork exercise by both the applicant and the city staff to regularly recertify income.
* **Significant investments for both TANF and ERDC.** Ensure that these initiatives provide adequate funds for targeted, evidence-based programs and graduated slopes for families using TANF and ERDC so that they retain more of their earnings and are more stable, thus less likely to return to assistance in the future. If serious revenue reform is considered, we will also be advocating for a significant increase to the EITC.
* Allocate **$4.2 million to 211Info**, to create a cost-effective, single point of contact and responsive staffing and scripting for all State agencies.
* **Fund the Oregon Hunger Response Fund**, which helps leverage the power of the Oregon Food Bank network by providing general fund dollars to help purchase food, transport food across the state, and ensure proper storage.