



Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County 2011 State Legislative Agenda

The Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County's mission is to provide strategic leadership in crafting policy and program solutions to affordable housing challenges in Snohomish County. We believe that the following policy and budget proposals will have a significant impact on the amount of housing that is affordable for families in Snohomish County.

Fund the Washington State Housing Trust Fund at \$200 Million

The Housing Trust Fund is Washington's primary tool for ensuring access to housing for working families and vulnerable adults. The Housing Trust Fund provides low interest loans and grants and leverages four times the funding from other public, private and philanthropic sources. Since 1989, the Housing Trust Fund has increased the stock of affordable housing by more than 35,000 units across the state, created thousands of jobs, and generated millions in state and local tax revenues. In Snohomish County, the Housing Trust Fund produced more than 400 affordable housing units from 2005-2009. An investment of \$200 million will allow Washington to keep pace with the growing need by building and preserving affordable housing across the state.

Support Proven Approaches to Ending Family Homelessness with \$6 Million for the Washington Families Fund

Since 2004, the Washington Families Fund has been a public-private partnership that leverages public investment with private-sector donations to expand the availability of supportive housing for families in need. The Families Fund invests in supportive services including job training, parenting classes, and financial planning that are paired with affordable housing and help connect families to the opportunities they need to stabilize their lives. The Families Fund partners with local Snohomish County agencies—including Housing Hope, Volunteers of America and YWCA—to implement proven approaches to ending family homelessness, change lives and strengthen communities throughout Washington.

Promote Foreclosure Mediation and Protection to Help Homeowners Keep their Homes

Two years after the financial crisis first hit, foreclosures continue to threaten the security of Washington's homeowners. According to RealtyTrac, 1 in every 352 housing units in Snohomish County received a foreclosure filing in September 2010. Washington can move to address the foreclosure crisis by simply requiring banks and homeowners to sit down together for mediation proceedings that provide the opportunity for a mutually beneficial work-out to be achieved. This bill would impose a \$240 fee, which would be a split cost between the bank and the client to pay for mediation. Twenty-three jurisdictions have similar mediation processes and data show that 60 percent of participants avoid losing their homes.