

2007 Washington State Legislative Session

5 Key Victories:

1. ***\$130 million for the Housing Trust Fund.*** This is a 30% increase from the previous biennium. Within the \$130 million, specific set-asides are earmarked for the following:

- \$9 million for weatherization (Energy Matchmakers program);
- \$5 million for housing for individuals with developmental disabilities;
- \$2.5 million for nonprofit's and housing authorities for revolving loan, self- help housing programs for low and moderate income families;
- \$1 million for housing and shelter for victims of domestic violence;
- \$14 million for farm worker housing;
- \$5 million for housing and shelters for homeless families with children;
- \$4 million for farm infrastructure improvements;
- \$1.5 million for housing for low-income or homeless Native Americans; and
- \$4 million for loans and grants for purchase of mobile/manufactured home communities.

Total in HTF set-asides: \$46 million

Total in non-obligated HTF funds: \$84 million

2. ***A new \$8 document recording fee, generating \$12.5 million per year in local dollars.*** HB 1359, the “Affordable Housing for All” bill, adds a new \$8 surcharge, revenue from which will generate about \$25.6 million this biennium for homeless housing assistance services and programs. Counties will retain 90% of the \$25.6 million, and the state/CTED will retain 10% of the new revenue. The Alliance worked in partnership with the Coalition for the Homeless, the United Way and Committee to End Homelessness and other advocates on this effort.
3. ***\$4 million for Offender Housing and \$1 million for vouchers for Foster Youth.*** Over the interim, the legislature and the Governor convened a task force on “Offender Reentry.” Of the many recommendations this task force put forward, one was to better ensure the housing outcomes of released offenders as part of a broader anti-recidivism strategy. After a long political fight, CTED was allocated \$3.9 million in the final budget to begin to implement an offender housing program. Similarly, the General Fund provided a new allocation of \$1 million for vouchers to ensure the safe and stable housing of youth exiting the foster care system. This is a huge step forward in the movement to use housing as a preventive measure. The Alliance worked in support of the Coalition for the Homeless, Columbia Legal Services and other advocates on this effort.
4. ***Manufactured Housing Enforcement and Preservation.*** Two critical threats face the thousands of manufactured homeowners in Washington State: vulnerability to mistreatment by park owners and the sale of their parks as land values skyrocket.

Beginning last summer, mobile homeowners, led by a coalition of advocates from the Mobile Homeowners of America, the Mobile Home Tenants Association, SOS-Homes and Columbia Legal Services, began organizing homeowners around the state. They hosted town halls with legislators and flooded the Governor's "listening sessions." In the 2007 session, the Alliance joined with that coalition of mobile home advocates to see passage of two key wins: HB 1461 which creates a real and enforceable dispute mediation program inside the Attorney General's office, offering the possibility that park owner abuses can finally be challenged in an effective way; and the creation of a \$4 million fund within the Housing Trust Fund dedicated solely to preserving manufactured home parks. While \$4 million is not nearly enough to meet the challenge of the land crisis, it is an important start.

5. ***Extending Tax Relief to Locally Funded Projects.*** For years the state has exempted affordable and supportive housing developments funded through State and Federal programs (such as the Housing Trust Fund) from property tax liability. That same protection, however, has not applied to projects serving the same mission, funded through locally administered dollars dollars, but who do not use the Trust Fund. HB 1450 extends that protection. HB 1450 also carries an amendment which clarifies that when assessing the value of low income housing projects, assessors should not use their "highest and best use" but rather should take into account the rent and other restrictions that come as part of an affordable housing development. The Alliance worked in partnership with the Housing Development Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County to see this bill passed.

Source: Washington Low Income Housing Alliance