

October 6, 2016

A Regional Coalition for Housing
16225 NE 87th Street, Suite A-3
Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Members of the ARCH Executive Board,

When eastside cities created ARCH in 1992, they did so with the goal of working collaboratively in order to ensure that their communities would be places where seniors, people with special needs, and families of all incomes could live affordably. This vision resulted in a unique partnership, which over the last 25 years has created thousands of affordable homes – homes that otherwise would not exist. The below organizations, representing an array of nonprofits and service providers who work on the east side, share these values of inclusivity and appreciate the important work that ARCH has done. However, in order to respond to the vastly increased need for affordable homes in our region, we ask that you update the parity goals for the Eastside Housing Trust Fund to a total of \$3-6 million per year.

We know that much has changed over the last 25 years on the east side, especially the cost of housing. As rents and home prices rise, more and more people are being priced out of their east side communities, including food service workers in our local restaurants, administrative and janitorial staff in our schools and hospitals, and young people who return from college in hopes of making a life in their hometowns, only to find that they can't afford to do so unless they move back into their parents' homes. With this increase in the cost of housing, we have also seen increases in homelessness in our communities. During the 2016 One Night Count, 245 people were found sleeping outside on the east side, while over 30,000 East King County residents pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing, putting them just one crisis away from losing their homes. In addition, the six school districts that serve ARCH member cities reported a collective total of 1,188 homeless students during the 2014-15 school year.

When the ARCH Executive Board created parity goals for the Eastside Housing Trust Fund in 1998, they set out to produce \$1-2 million each year for affordable housing. Since then, rents, home prices, and the cost of producing affordable homes have all approximately doubled. If we were to respond to these increases by only doubling the parity goals, this would bring us back to the original level of production intended. However, in light of the immense and growing need for housing affordability in our community and the dramatically changed economic context of our region, we do not believe that a return to the status quo of the late 1990s is sufficient. Instead, we ask that the ARCH Executive Board demonstrate its commitment to addressing our region's housing crisis by tripling the parity goals, bringing them up to at least \$3 million per year, with an aspiration of \$6 million per year.

We know that many cities are pursuing legislative strategies that would give them additional local funding authority, and we applaud this work and hope to partner with them on it. However, the members of your community who are homeless and unstably housed cannot wait. Together, expanded parity goals, increased general fund contributions, and legislative strategies will enable us to live up to our values, and ensure that people of all backgrounds and incomes can afford to call our cities home.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you further and to answer any questions you may have for us. Please contact Nicki Olivier Hellenkamp at nicki@housingconsortium.org or 206-682-9541 to arrange a time for us to meet.

Sincerely,

