



# 2017 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Housing Development Consortium Seattle-King County (HDC) is a nonprofit membership organization of 125 private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public partners dedicated to the vision that all people live with dignity in safe, healthy, affordable homes in communities of opportunity. HDC supports the following state advocacy priorities\* for 2017:

## **Fund the State Housing Trust Fund**

It should be possible for working families and vulnerable people to afford housing and still have enough money for basic expenses like groceries, gas, and childcare. The Housing Trust Fund is Washington's mechanism for ensuring access to housing for working families and vulnerable individuals. Since 1989, the Housing Trust Fund has invested more than \$1 billion in new and improved housing, leveraged more than \$4 billion in private and public sector support, and increased the stock of affordable housing by more than 44,000 units across the state. Investments in the Housing Trust Fund create thousands of jobs and stimulate Washington's local economies--creating healthy, vibrant, and affordable communities.

*Invest \$200 million in the Housing Trust Fund in the 2017-18 biennium to address the growing need for homes affordable to low-income families and individuals.*

## **Preserve & Expand Funding for Homelessness**

Public investments play a vital role in improving the availability and quality of affordable housing, supporting people transitioning out of homelessness, and preventing homelessness for low-income families. For every \$100 increase in rent, homelessness increases 15% in metro areas and 39% in nearby suburbs and rural areas. A portion of document recording fees, which fund investments that fight homelessness, reduce criminal justice costs, and improve educational achievement, is set to expire. Now is the time to renew and expand this critical funding source.

*Support HB 1570, the Washington Housing Opportunities Act (WFOA), to renew and increase document recording fees to fight homelessness.*

## **Authorize Local Funding Options for Affordable Homes**

King County's many moderate and low-wage workers should be able to live affordably close to transit and near their jobs, rather than endure long, expensive and polluting commutes that place them far from family and community for too much of the working day. In locations with skyrocketing rents, like Seattle, Bellevue, and Vancouver, public resources for affordable housing have not kept up with growing need. Allowing cities to enact local funding options, including up to 0.25% Real Estate Excise Tax, for affordable housing would provide local governments the appropriate tools to address their local needs.

*Allow local governments the authority to enact up to 0.25% Real Estate Excise Tax for affordable housing.*

Adopted September 9, 2016

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### **Enact Source of Income Discrimination Protection**

Housing Choice vouchers (otherwise known as Section 8) and other kinds of rental subsidies prevent homelessness and provide individuals and families the ability to rent market-rate homes when their personal income does not. However, when landlords deny tenancy solely because an applicant is relying on a housing subsidy or “unearned income” (such as SSI) to pay all, or a portion, of their rent, it limits the ability of these programs to succeed and for these households to thrive. Under this legislation, landlords would still be allowed to reject applications of tenants who do not have enough income/resources to meet the monthly rental payment or for other legal grounds applied equally to all applicants. Some King County cities (including Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, and Seattle) already restrict this kind of discrimination. This legislation would create a fair playing field for all landlords.

*Enact legislation to protect renters from unfair source-of-income discrimination.*

### **Increase Revenue to Fund Education & Protect Essential Services**

Washington students deserve a top notch education, but they also need to have stable housing, healthy foods, and other basic needs to help them succeed. Additional revenues are needed to ensure Washington State can meet its paramount duty to fund education while maintaining our commitment to health, safety, and opportunity for all our residents.

*Adopt a balanced and responsible budget that increases revenue and preserves vital human services.*

\*This is not a comprehensive list of all policies HDC intends to advocate for or support in 2017.

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