



**Date:** July 16, 2014  
**To:** Council Member Sally Clark, Chair, Housing Affordability, Human Services and Economic Resiliency Committee  
**From:** Steve Walker, Director, Office of Housing  
**Subject:** **Director** Report

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## **Office of Housing (OH) – Recent and Upcoming Activities**

### **Housing Affordability Agenda**

Staff is active and focused on initial framing and process planning for development of a 10 year strategic vision for housing affordability in Seattle. Our objective is to conduct a thorough review of existing programs and strategies and explore opportunities to expand resources and tools to address the housing affordability challenges facing Seattle. Among our challenges will be synthesizing current efforts with the healthy exercise of stepping back and considering new approaches. As we set the course for this critically important work we look forward to coordination between the Executive and Council; particularly with the CHASER and PLUS committees.

### **Notice of Funding Availability Announced**

On June 26<sup>th</sup> the Office of Housing (OH) announced the 2014 Rental Housing NOFA availing approximately \$22 million in capital funds to support the production and preservation of long-term affordable rental housing. Among the stated priorities include:

- Promote housing opportunity and choice throughout the City,
- Provide housing that serves individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness,
- Develop sustainable, transit-oriented communities that give low-income residents access to transportation, services, and economic opportunity,
- Promote cost-effective sustainable design, construction, rehabilitation, and operations of affordable housing,
- Promote preservation of affordable housing, and prevent displacement of low-income residents, through purchase and rehabilitation of existing housing,
- Contribute to the development of housing that serves low-income seniors and people with disabilities with the appropriate levels of operating and service supports,
- Contribute to the development of housing that serves low-wage working families and individuals, providing a mix of unit sizes to accommodate a range of household sizes, particularly in areas with access to transit.

## **Asset Management**

To ensure quality affordable housing, our Asset Management unit monitors existing projects to make sure that our City-funded units are healthy and livable for low income and workforce tenants. Monitoring includes an annual review of operations and other reporting requirements. The Annual Report is a valuable tool for monitoring the performance of housing projects and determining compliance with contract terms. There are now over 12,000 City-Funded apartments for low income Seattle residents. The Asset Management unit is in their peak season of reviewing Annual Reports submitted by the owners and managers of the almost 300 buildings in the portfolio.

Several public funders in Washington created the Combined Funders Annual Report to meet the needs of all participating funders and to facilitate reporting requirements for contractors with multiple public funding sources. Beginning with the 2009 reporting period, annual report information must be submitted via the Web Based Annual Reporting System (WBARs).

## **Personnel**

With the recent approval of the supplemental budget the Office of Housing gained authority to refill two critical positions eliminated under the prior administration: Deputy Director and Executive Assistant. As you know we moved quickly to fill the Deputy Director position in-house through the appointment of Miriam Roskin and we are just this week completing the interview process to backfill both Miriam's position and hire the much needed administrative support. We appreciate your support throughout this process.

## **HUD Review of OH Procedures for HOME-Funded Projects**

HUD periodically reviews local agencies' procedures for ensuring that rental housing produced with HOME program funds are affordable to low income households and maintained for the requisite period of affordability. HUD recently reviewed OH's methods for conducting long-term compliance monitoring during the period of affordability. HUD found that the OH's ongoing, formal monitoring procedures exceed the minimum required by regulations (reporting, records review, and unit inspections). In addition, OH assesses the financial viability and physical condition of HOME-assisted projects. During the exit interview local HUD officials specifically praised the OH Asset Management team's stewardship of public resources.

## **Committee to End Homelessness (CEH)**

In partnership with the Human Services Department, OH is involved in an ongoing series of briefing discussions with the Mayor's Office in support of his new role as co-chair of the CEH Governing Board. The Mayor will join you at the upcoming Governing Board meeting to support CEH's vision to make "the experience of homelessness in King County a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence." The City is well represented by both Council and the Mayor in CEH activities.