REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2023
We acknowledge that our staff, members, and advocates live and work on the lands of the Coast Salish, Interior Salish, and Yakama Nation tribes. We honor with gratitude the land itself and all of the native tribes of Washington State.

We recognize the historical and systemic exploitation and oppression of indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and other historically under-invested people which has led to disproportionality in experiences of homelessness and housing instability. Our collective work seeks systemic solutions to undo past and current harm caused by racism and oppression.

We pay Real Rent to the Duwamish tribe. Learn about paying real rent. Our staff, board, and members live and work in communities throughout Washington (and beyond). Learn more about the land where you live and work: native-land.ca

Dear Friend,

I’m proud to share this Report to the Community with you. It represents our work over the past year and the progress we’ve made in the fight for housing justice.

The 2023 legislative session was a long one – with many ups and downs along the way. In the end, we made important progress with budget and policy outcomes that will mean thousands of families and individuals will have safe and secure places to call home.

This is incredible and meaningful progress – but nowhere near the scale necessary to make sure everyone in Washington has a safe home they can afford. Despite declaring it the “year of housing,” state lawmakers could have and should have done more.

We don’t measure progress only by the outcome of one legislative session. We also measure it by how our movement is growing and how our work reflects our values.

Our rent stabilization campaign engaged nearly 8,000 new people in the fight for housing justice! Renters across Washington are saying enough to the rent increases that are far outpacing their wages. Progressive landlords joined renters in this effort because they care about the health of their communities and know they can still make a fair profit with reasonable limits on rent increases. Over the 105-day session, dozens of advocates testified in support of our priorities and more than 3,500 advocates sent more than 52,000 messages to lawmakers.

In this report, you’ll also read about ways we are leaning into our values. We created a new position focused on strengthening our equity and racial justice work, within the organization and within the housing justice movement. In 2023 we’ll begin offering training and racial affinity group spaces for our members to learn together how to undo racism and advance equity in our organizations and our communities. We also created a part-time fellowship position for a new organizer to work with our Resident Action Project to build power with people directly impacted by the housing crisis.

I hope you’ll find something in this report that sparks your interest. It is intended to be an invitation to join us in this work. There are many ways to do that: become a member, make a contribution, organize your neighbors, or just reach out and ask for a conversation. There’s a role for each of us in the struggle for housing justice!

Sincerely,

Rachael Myers
Executive Director
The 2023 housing justice priorities were created to move us toward our vision of an equitable and racially just Washington where each and every one of us lives in a healthy, affordable home in a thriving community of our choice.

To develop our 2023 priorities, we heard from people across Washington through survey responses, listening sessions, and one-on-one interviews. We prioritized gathering input from people and communities most impacted by homelessness and the lack of affordable housing.

Throughout our outreach, we spoke with tenants, advocates, and those with lived experience of homelessness to center our agenda on issues that have a statewide impact, that reduce race-based and other inequities, that increase equity, fairness, and opportunity, and that have both immediate and long-term impacts on preventing and ending homelessness as well as increasing affordable housing.

What we heard aligns with the results of recent polls: People in Washington want the Legislature to address the affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

WHAT WE HEARD:

“Housing justice is racial justice.”

“I have been living with a friend for five years as it is all I can afford. I sold my house because I wanted to retire and couldn’t afford to keep up the mortgage payments. In hindsight, those payments were less than current apartment rental rates for a one bedroom.”

“Housing costs too much and people are hurting.”

The 2023 housing justice agenda lifted up solutions to create equitable housing opportunities for every community in our state and to address the affordable housing and homelessness crisis. It reflected the most urgent priorities, informed by stakeholders across the state who know best what their communities need. Find our complete 2023 priorities here: www.wliha.org/advocacy/2023-public-policy-priorities.
The Operating Budget included significant funding to prevent and address homelessness:

- An 8% increase in the Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) cash grant starting in 2024
- Over $50 million for House Bill 1260/Alvarado to eliminate the requirement that ABD recipients repay state support when they become eligible for federal assistance
- A permanent ongoing increase of $26.5 million for the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) rental assistance program
- An ongoing homeless services increase of 6.5%, which is a $45 million investment in our state’s frontline provider workforce
- $5 million for eviction prevention and increased funding for tenant’s right to counsel
- $150 million for House Bill 1474/Taylor to create the Covenant Investment Act to provide homeownership opportunities for people harmed by racist real estate practices like racially restrictive covenants and redlining
- Funding was also included to make up the loss of funding for homeless services that is result of reduced document recording fee revenue

The Capital Budget made significant investments in affordable homes, including:

- $400 million for the Housing Trust Fund
- $40 million for land acquisition to quickly acquire land for affordable housing to be built
- $14.5 million for shelter and housing for homeless youth and young adults
- $6 million for preservation and investments in manufactured housing communities
- $60 million for infrastructure needed when building new affordable homes

In addition to the budget wins, lawmakers also passed House Bill 1074/Thai which will prevent tenants from being charged for false or exaggerated damages when they move out of a rental home.

These wins are a direct result of the incredible, relentless advocacy of thousands of people across the state who spoke out this session.

Despite these wins, lawmakers missed opportunities to truly address the rising cost of rents across our state and make transformational investments in affordable homes. Thousands of advocates contacted their lawmakers in an effort to push for rent fairness, rent stabilization, and the creation of a permanent funding source for the Housing Trust Fund. Our work is not done on these issues, and we will continue building the movement for housing justice in the coming months.
EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

“White people and people of color each have work to do separately and together.... For white people, a caucus provides time and space to work explicitly and intentionally on understanding white culture and white privilege and to increase one’s critical analysis around these concepts. A white caucus also puts the onus on white people to teach each other about these ideas, rather than constantly relying on people of color to teach them. For people of color, a caucus is a place to work with their peers on their experiences of internalized racism, for healing and to work on liberation”

—FROM RACIAL JUSTICE EQUITY TOOLS
www.racialequitytools.org/resources/act/strategies/caucus-and-affinity-groups

NEW POSITION: DIRECTOR OF EQUITY, RACIAL JUSTICE, AND CULTURE

We are excited to announce our newest position at the Housing Alliance: Director of Equity, Racial Justice, and Culture. Ma.Caroline Lopez is taking on this critical role. We understand that Housing Justice is Racial Justice. Racial disparities in housing were created by people who believed that only people of their own race and gender were deserving of happiness, rights, and liberty. The policies that were created such as redlining, restrictive covenants, and the creation of reservations, have led to displacement, housing discrimination, high eviction rates, homelessness, gentrification, food insecurities, inaccessible employment, environmental health hazards, increased criminalization, disparities in education, racial generational wealth gaps, and more. This position will ensure we have more capacity and focus to integrate anti-racism within our organization, programs, community organizing, and policy work. We also understand that a culture that builds trust, care, respect, and community is essential for individuals and member organizations to authentically participate in the work of equity and racial justice.

RACIAL JUSTICE CAUCUSING

Holding “caucus” groups (aka: affinity groups) is a racial justice strategy that has proven to be an effective way to discuss, reflect, and take action toward anti-racism in a more open, connected, person, and healing centered forum. The Housing Alliance staff has been holding organizational monthly affinity spaces, specifically Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) and white caucus groups for a number of years. Since 2020, we have offered BIPOC monthly gathering spaces, inviting people who have attended caucus groups during our annual conference. In 2023, the joint boards’ Equity & Racial Justice Committee has taken the lead on establishing affinity groups. We are also currently creating new affinity spaces for for our members. If you are interested in this or any other affinity space, please contact: macarolinel@wliha.org.
In early 2021, we engaged students from the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance to do a preliminary review of equity impacts related to the state Housing Trust Fund. The full report is available here and the executive summary here. In December 2022, the Department of Commerce completed and published the Capital Projects Equity Review, which included a review of the Housing Trust Fund.

Last year we began convening advocates from BIPOC led organizations and people with lived experience of housing instability who were interested in how the Department of Commerce would address these recommendations and ensure the Housing Trust Fund is a tool to advance equity.

The Coalition wrote several letters to the Department of Commerce calling for changes in how the Housing Trust Fund is allocated and how policy is set. Responding to those requests, the Department has convened a working group to consider changes in the make-up and role of the Policy Advisory Team that advises the Department on Housing Trust Fund policy.

Recognizing our role as a gatekeeper with access to power, we are striving to use our position to make room for the people and communities most impacted by the affordable housing crisis to speak for themselves. Changing large, entrenched systems is hard, sometimes messy work, and we’re learning as we go. We’re grateful for members of the Equity Coalition for their leadership and appreciative of the Department of Commerce staff for listening and learning.

In 2020, conference organizers established an Equity Committee to focus on using an equity lens throughout all aspects of the conference. The committee is made up of volunteers across the state, including people with lived experience who hold different identities and perspectives to help support these efforts. This has led to the creation of new accessibility procedures, including language interpretation and supporting people with additional visual and or audio needs. This committee reviews the overall conference program, speaker choices, etc. ensuring that there are sessions based on equity and/or racial justice within the program.

The conference also holds multiple BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, white, and disability affinity spaces each year so that groups have time to connect, learn together, and debrief during the conference. Participants from the conference are also invited to attend monthly BIPOC and/or Queer gatherings. Email Ma.Caroline if you identify with one or more of these groups and would like to attend these gatherings.

In 2022 we offered a Fall Lunch & Learn: Equity Racial Justice, & Culture training series including “Housing Justice is Racial Justice 101” and “Hidden in Plain Sight: Implicit Bias.” We offered pre-conference sessions on “Anti-Blackness Actionshop: Examining the ‘Anti’ in Anti-Blackness” followed by a Black Caucus session. Staff also co-created a session at the conference titled, “Matter is the Minimum: Why Race Equity Executives are essential to every organization.” Resident Action Project (RAP) workshops and summits always include a race equity component or session.
When setting our policy priorities, the Housing Alliance performs community outreach to collect information through focus groups, surveys and one-on-one meetings to gather input from community members across the state. Over the last several policy agendas, the Housing Alliance instituted a practice of prioritizing input from people with lived experience of housing injustice, housing instability, homelessness, tenants, and the intersections of people who identify as BIPOC. This intentional process includes demographic questions on our survey that are then disaggregated. Our aim was to lift up input from people who have been racialized in this country and most impacted by housing and homelessness policies and practices. In 2022, the input on our priorities didn’t vary significantly by race, but we will still utilize this practice because that could be different in the future. We will continue to utilize this process and to make improvements, and invite input and engagement from members.

With support from a key funding partner, we had the opportunity to make small grants to organizations rooted in communities of color to support their advocacy for the housing needs in their communities. These organizations partnered with us during the legislative session to make sure lawmakers heard directly from their communities about housing priorities. We hope these relationships will continue to grow and shape our future priorities. Organizations included:

- Bellingham Tenants Union (Whatcom County)
- Odyssey World International Education Services (Clark County)
- Southwest Washington Equity Coalition (Clark County)
- Carl Maxey Center (Spokane)

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MATTERS!

WA LOW INCOME HOUSING ALLIANCE BOARD

As of June 2023

11 members have experienced homelessness or housing insecurity, lived in subsidized housing, and/or are currently low-income

4 members are renters

WA HOUSING ALLIANCE ACTION FUND BOARD

As of June 2023

4 members have experienced homelessness or housing insecurity, lived in subsidized housing, and/or are currently low-income

4 members are renters

5 White
1 Black
1 Indigenous Latine
1 Polynesian

5 White
1 Native Hawaiian
1 Native American

6 White
2 Latina/o
4 Black
5 Bi-racial/multi-racial

6 White
1 Native American
2 Asian American
1 Black
2 Latina
During our last strategic planning process, we recognized that our vision, mission, and values didn't reflect some of the most central aspects of our work. Most importantly, they were missing language centering equity and racial justice and the importance of leadership of people and communities most impacted by housing injustice.

Our boards approved a strategic plan calling for an update. Over approximately nine months, board members and staff developed new language. Our mission and vision were drafted by our board strategic planning committee, and revised by our board's equity and racial justice committee. Then our staff and other board members weighed in with feedback. Our values started with staff, then went to our board equity and racial justice committee, our strategic planning committee, and finally to the full board for feedback.

We're pleased to share our updated vision, mission, and values. These words and the beliefs they represent guide all that we do.
A home is fundamental: Like air to breathe and food to eat, safe shelter is a fundamental human need. Ensuring that need is met for each and every one of us is a collective responsibility.

Homes End Homelessness: Homelessness is caused by a lack of adequate housing. Ending homelessness is possible.

Equity and Racial Justice: We strive to be an inclusive, anti-racist organization. We prioritize equity and racial justice in our policy priorities, organizing strategies, and organizational culture.

Accountability: We are accountable to people who need affordable homes. We center those voices and build power with people most impacted by the affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

Lived Expertise: We value the expertise of people who have experienced housing injustice. We believe that better policy is created when people and communities most impacted by housing injustice lead the way in creating and advocating for solutions.

Impact: We are building a movement to achieve transformational change. While we do that, we prioritize impact by changing policies to improve people’s lives now.

Our vision is an equitable and racially just Washington where each and every one of us lives in a healthy, affordable home in a thriving community of our choice.

We change public policy so that people of all races, ethnicities, abilities, genders, and identities can live in safe, healthy homes they can afford.

We do this through educating decision-makers, organizing, and amplifying the voices and priorities of people and communities most impacted by housing instability and homelessness.

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (our 501c3) and the Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund (our 501c4) share goals, but sometimes use different tactics. Combined, we’re using all the tools available to achieve our vision.
RESIDENT ACTION PROJECT (RAP)

Resident Action Project is a statewide network led by people who live in affordable housing communities, or have experienced housing injustice, instability, or homelessness. RAP is building power to change policy through storytelling, organizing, and civic engagement.

In 2022, RAP hosted an in-person summit in Bellingham, engaged resident leaders in power and movement building training sessions, conducted voter registration, and mobilized voters in key voting districts across the state. RAP members regularly speak truth to power. They hold a monthly meeting with staff from the Housing Assistance Unit at the State Department of Commerce.

In 2022, RAP leaders joined resident leaders from other states in meeting with HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge, HUD Chief of Staff Jenn Jones, HUD Senior Advisor for Housing and Services Richard Cho, and leadership at the US Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Four RAP leaders, Mindy Woods, Bertrand “Mr. B.” Harrell, Jennifer Bereskin, and Mercedes White Calf serve on the Housing Alliance and/or Housing Action Fund boards. In 2021, Mindy Woods joined the board of the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

RAP is a joint effort of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, the Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund, and Community Change. For more information, please visit the RAP webpage at wliha.org/RAP or contact Duaa-Rahemaah Williams, duaarahemaahw@wliha.org.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT LEADS

Lawmakers listen first and foremost to their local constituents. The LD Leads program builds and maintains an active local base of housing advocates in state legislative districts, alerting them to take advocacy action at strategic times. When a critical issue arises, we rely on LD Leads to mobilize those local contacts to encourage lawmakers to make important votes to move the Housing Alliance policy agenda forward. LD Leads also meet with lawmakers in the interim period between legislative sessions to build background support for upcoming priorities.

Working closely with the Housing Alliance, LD Leads can strengthen their legislative and advocacy skills while building community and developing stronger relationships with their lawmakers.

To learn how to become an LD Lead and how to become a strong advocate in your district, contact Po Leapai, pol@wliha.org.

CONFERENCE ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

In 2022 we held our third-ever fully virtual conference, convening more than 800 people over three days to learn from each other, share ideas and best practices, and grow the movement to end homelessness in Washington and beyond. In partnership with the Housing Washington conference, keynote speakers included Ann Oliva, Chief Executive Officer for the National Alliance to End Homelessness; Vu Le, Founder of Nonprofit AF; Gregg Colburn, UW Assistant Professor and author; and a special message from Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal. The conference included 38 breakout sessions and plenaries with 70 speakers and caucus spaces for BIPOC, people with disabilities, LGBTQI2S+ people, and people who wanted to explore their identities of privilege. Holding the event virtually once again was more accessible for many who would have otherwise had the additional time and expense of traveling across the state.

—Po Leapai,
Advocacy Organizer
## 2022 FINANCIALS

### HOUSING ALLIANCE

#### 2022 REVENUE
- Grants: $486,625
- Membership: $190,754
- Sponsorship: $167,137
- Individual Contributions: $94,257
- Event registration: $90,959
- Other: $521
- **Total Revenue: $1,030,254**

#### 2022 EXPENSES
- Staff + benefits: $722,280
- Operating Expenses: $256,289
- Consultants: $136,150
- Professional fees: $32,587
- Events and Accessibility: $27,854
- Equity + Racial Justice: $23,948
- Travel: $15,057
- Other: $65,187
- **Total Expenses: $1,279,352**

### HOUSING ALLIANCE ACTION FUND

#### 2022 REVENUE
- Grants: $250,000
- Individual contributions + membership: $24,148
- **Total Revenue: $274,148**

#### 2022 EXPENSES
- Staff + benefits: $245,862
- Operating expenses: $27,777
- Consultants: $6,917
- Professional fees: $6,414
- Advertising: $5,215
- Events and Accessibility: $1,206
- Equity + Racial Justice: $997
- Other: $22,978
- **Total Expenses: $317,365**

### STAFF
- **WASHINGTON LOW INCOME HOUSING ALLIANCE BOARD**
  - Emily Alvarado
  - Jennifer Bereskin
  - Mark Blatter, Treasurer
  - Adria Buchanan
  - Lisa Byers, Strategic Planning Committee Chair
  - Paula Carvalho, Vice President, Equity and Racial Justice Committee Co-Chair
  - Julio Cortes
  - Pam Duncan, Equity and Racial Justice Committee Co-Chair
  - Kresha Green

- **WASHINGTON HOUSING ALLIANCE ACTION FUND BOARD**
  - Poppa Handy, Secretary
  - Bretrand “Mr. B” Harrell
  - Lee Mudrock
  - J. Peter Shapiro
  - Karolyn Tom
  - Kim Toskey
  - Liz Trautman, President
  - Sol Villarreal
  - Mercedes White Calf
  - Mindy Woods, Resource Development Committee Chair

- **WASHINGTON HOUSING ALLIANCE ACTION FUND STAFF**
  - Itzchel Bazan, Development and Events Manager
  - Emily Alvarado
  - Sheila Babo Anderson, President
  - Terri Anderson
  - Jennifer Bereskin
  - Kasey Burton
  - Christena Coutoubos
  - Kim Herman
  - Sharonne Navas, Endorsement Committee Co-Chair
  - Paula Sardinas
  - J. Peter Shapiro, Endorsement Committee Co-Chair
  - Loren Tierney, Treasurer

- **WASHINGTON HOUSING ALLIANCE ACTION FUND STAFF**
  - Gian Mitchell, Quest Fellow
  - Rachael Myers, Executive Director
  - Megan Schaffer, Community Organizing Fellow, Resident Action Project
  - Michele Thomas, Director of Policy and Advocacy
  - Duaa-Rahemaah Williams, Statewide Organizer
WHO WE ARE

“Housing should be a right, not a privilege. But housing access is controlled and used as a tool to uphold racism and oppression. I believe we can change this.”

MICHELE THOMAS, Director of Policy and Advocacy

“As someone with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity, I’ve turned my pain into purpose. I am impacted to be impactful.”

PO LEAPAI, Advocacy Organizer

“I got into this work because many years ago I was reminded that my voice was powerful — Your voice and words have power!”

DUAA-RAHEMAAH WILLIAMS, Statewide Organizer

“I got into this work because I grew up on a very low income and wanted to address the needed systemic changes. And because my liberation is tied to everyone fighting for liberation for all.”

ITZCHEL BAZAN, Development and Events Manager

“I believe in us! Our collective liberation rises from interdependence, solidarity, accountability, adaptability, integrity, bravery, trust, healing, love, and joy.”

— MA.CAROLINE LOPEZ, Director of Equity, Racial Justice, and Culture

“Advocacy works, and when we all pull together we can create a community that includes a home for everyone.”

ROB HUFF, Communications Specialist

“A home is everything. It’s where we gather with those we love and strengthen ourselves for what the outside world holds. We all deserve that.”

RACHAEL MYERS, Executive Director

“I’m an organizer at heart, and know that the people with the most at stake will lead us to the most powerful wins.”

TERESA CLARK, Deputy Director

“I enjoy knowing that what I do for the Housing Alliance enables positive changes for people across our state.”

KATHY LYNN, Finance and Operations Manager
Organizational members of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance bring their expertise to our advocacy and ensure we understand the needs and challenges in communities all across Washington.

NOT A MEMBER YET? Learn about organizational membership at wliha.org/about/membership or individual membership bit.ly/joinWHAAF. Contact Itzchel Bazan at itzchelb@wliha.org for more information.
ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS (CONT.)

Quality Behavioral Health
Benton County
Blue Mountain Action Council
Franklin County
Serenity House
Clark County
Rural Resources
Island County
Olympic Community Action Programs

King County
Kitsap County
HopeSource
Washington Gorge Action Programs
Lewis County
Okanogan Community Action Council
Pacific County
Family Crisis Network

Pierce County
Opportunity Council
Skagit County
Snohomish County
Thurston County
Wahkiakum County
Whatcom County
Whitman Community Action Center
Yakima County

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE HOUSING ALLIANCE!
WHETHER YOU ARE A MEMBER, DONOR, ADVOCATE, OR ALL OF THE ABOVE, YOU ARE PART OF A POWERFUL MOVEMENT!

206-442-9455

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