



WASHINGTON LOW INCOME
Housing Alliance

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Statement from Executive Director Rachael Myers on Governor Jay Inslee's proposed investments in homelessness programs

At a time when the federal government is not only underfunding, but ignoring best practices for ending homelessness, we are extremely proud that our Governor is recommending significant new investments in the Housing and Essential Needs program, permanent supportive housing, shelter, and other critical homelessness interventions.

The proposal will invest \$146 million in the current budget and includes funding for enhanced shelter and for long term solutions including permanent supportive housing. It comes after last year's historic appropriation of \$175 million in the state Housing Trust Fund to build new affordable homes, and the creation of a new local funding source for cities and counties to use to build affordable homes in their communities (HB1406). This year we will also be asking the Legislature for an additional \$10 million investment in the Housing Trust fund in order to prevent the loss of currently affordable homes.

Expanding shelter is necessary when people have nowhere to sleep tonight. Permanent housing is the solution to homelessness. Both are necessary investments and we applaud the Governor for recognizing that. We agree with Governor Inslee that Washington's homelessness crisis is being driven by the sky-high rents across the state. Income inequality also underlies our crisis – as rent levels are set based on what upper income earning households can afford, middle- and lower-income households are left struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Many are not able to make it.

The unprecedented proposal for a deep investment in effective strategies to solve homelessness is bold, justified, and will be put to immediate use to keep people in their homes. We call on the Legislature to follow the Governor's lead.

**Rachael Myers
Executive Director
Washington Low Income Housing Alliance**