



STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Lead Priorities

The **Washington Low Income Housing Alliance** advocates for public policy that furthers our vision of all Washington residents having the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities. Our lead priorities for 2014 are included below. Each item has a unique hashtag that we'll be using throughout the session to provide up-to-the-minute legislative and advocacy updates at www.twitter.com/wliha.

These are in no particular order.

Invest in the Washington State Housing Trust Fund (HTF)

By creating affordable homes, HTF builds thriving communities & improves health & education outcomes for our children.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#HTF2014**

The private, for-profit housing market builds market-rate developments with rents that are out of reach for lower income families and individuals. The Housing Trust Fund evens the field by creating safe, affordable homes. Each year, the state invests in the Housing Trust Fund through the Capital Budget and these funds are used to build and preserve affordable homes across the state.

Tell your legislators: Please invest as close as possible to the historical average investment of 3% to 4% of the total biennial Capital Budget.

Protect & Strengthen Housing & Essential Needs and Aged, Blind & Disabled Programs

Protect Washington's lifeline for disabled and elderly adults.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#HEN2014**

The state's Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program ensures that people with temporary mental or physical disabilities can meet their basic needs and access stable housing when facing extreme economic hardship. The Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) program helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental health illness or permanent physical disabilities with \$197 per month while they are applying to the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. Both programs continue to be at risk for cuts this session.

Tell your legislators: HEN and ABD should be protected from new budget cuts. Additionally, the following two changes are needed to improve program access and recipients' health and housing stability:

- Increase the ABD cash grant. Then, permanently disabled and elderly adults can have adequate resources to secure stable housing while their SSI application is pending.
- Extend HEN eligibility to people whose primary disability is chemical dependency. Stable housing is critical for the success and survival of people undergoing treatment and recovering from an addiction.

Enact Part 3 of the Fair Tenant Screening Act

Make tenant screening reports practical, efficient, and portable.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#FTSA2014**

The average renter will have to pay for three or more tenant screening reports when they are trying to find new housing. These screening fees can become a significant moving cost for families on limited incomes, already burdened with a deposit and first month's rent. Yet one tenant screening report has virtually the same information as the other reports.

Continued on the other side.

Lead Priorities - continued

Tell your legislators: Support the Fair Tenant Screening Act creating tenant screening report portability, so people have better opportunities to afford a home. This is how the process could work:

1. A renter buys a standard online tenant screening report that meets the legal definition of a current and comprehensive report.
2. When this renter provides access to this secure, online report to landlords, they should not be able to charge this prospective tenant for another report.
3. Landlords will still be free to use their own tenant screening company, but they won't be able to charge the tenant for this cost.

Prevent the Sunsetting of the State's Document Recording Fees

Make permanent Washington's most vital resource for homelessness programs.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#DRF2014**

Washington State has embraced the use of modest recording fees on some real estate related documents as a significant source of funds for homelessness programs. These effective state and local programs help transition people off the streets into shelters and homes. The fees are the state's most significant funding source for homelessness programs, representing almost half of all funds.

This fee is set to reduce by \$10 in July 2015 and then reduce by another \$20 in July 2017. This would result in a loss of 62.5% of total current funding for homelessness. If this happens, effective homelessness programs across the state will experience severe cuts or will close. This could seriously set back the progress we've made in decreasing homelessness in Washington.

Tell your legislators: Make the document recording fees permanent to keep Washington on the successful path of preventing and ending homelessness.

Leverage Medicaid Expansion to End Homelessness & Improve Health

Ensure that services for people living in supportive housing can be sufficiently billed to Medicaid.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#Medicaid2014**

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, many chronically homeless adults, including those residing in supportive housing, were not eligible for Medicaid or had barriers in applying. In 2014, nearly all homeless persons will, by virtue of their incomes, be eligible for Medicaid, including ones already living in supportive housing. If a Medicaid Supportive Housing Services Benefit was created, then supportive housing providers could bill Medicaid for supportive services provided to eligible residents. This would allow more chronically homeless people to access these services, would improve the integration of behavioral and health services, and would help individuals with severe and chronic health conditions stay off the street and be in a healthy home.

Tell your legislators: This issue may be addressed outside the legislative process. Please check back at our website for more information about this as the 2014 session unfolds.

Enact Revenue to Avoid Cuts to Services and Programs

Washington's budget should create more opportunities for safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities.

Twitter/Facebook Hashtag: **#NewRevenueWA**

The Housing Alliance encourages our elected officials to continue exploring new sources of revenue, including taxes, to preserve critical programs like Washington Families Fund, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Basic Health, Working Connections Childcare, and others. We advocate our legislators to prioritize keeping people safely housed and programs offering paths out of poverty.

Updated 1/15/2014