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2018 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Association of Washington Housing Authorities (AWHA) supports the legislature's goal of a decent home in a healthy, safe environment for every resident of the state. Families who lack stable housing rarely are able to make strides in education or employment, manage their health or day-to-day tasks. We are committed to working in local communities across Washington to ensure that every family has a decent, safe, affordable home.

Increase Capital Investments in Affordable Housing

Capital investment from the state is Washington's primary mechanism for ensuring access to housing for families and vulnerable individuals. Through preservation of existing affordable housing, new construction and rehabilitation, capital funding provides place-based resources critical to strengthening communities. The legislature's failure to enact a capital budget during the 2017 legislative session has put projects on hold that would help address the state's housing crisis. It is imperative that the state pass a capital budget that includes a strong commitment to the housing trust fund.

Document Recording Fee Expansion and Renewal

The Document Recording Fee is a surcharge on real estate transactions that serves as a vital source of funding for homeless programs in Washington State, with portions split between the state and local governments. The legislature should act to eliminate the sunset on over 60% of state homelessness funds, increase the Homeless Housing Assistance Surcharge and fix the 45% mandate for private landlords. Expanding and making these fees permanent will help ensure that local communities have the funding necessary to provide services and housing for homeless individuals and their families.

Source of Income Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of one's income source is often used to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, and disability status. Statewide legislation banning source of income discrimination would prevent landlords from denying tenancy based solely on the grounds of the tenant relying on a housing subsidy or unearned income (such as SSI) to pay for all or a portion of their rent. Under such legislation, landlords would still be allowed to reject applications of tenants who do not have enough income or resources to meet the monthly rental payment.

Breakfast After the Bell

School meals are an effective way to get vital nutrients to children so that they are prepared to succeed in school and life. At a time when one in four children in Washington is at risk of hunger, school meals are a critical part of the child nutrition safety net. Hungry kids can't learn, putting them at risk of falling behind. A solid education is the foundation for economic self-sufficiency. National studies show that students who eat school breakfast increase their math and reading scores as well as improve their speed and memory in cognitive tests. Requiring schools with large low-income populations to participate in Breakfast After the Bell will increase student learning and allow the state to take advantage of the full federal reimbursement for this essential program.

Protect Essential Programs that Serve the Most Vulnerable

Programs such as Housing and Essential Needs (HEN), Medicaid, Aged, Blind and Disabled Program (ABD), State Food Assistance Program (FAP), Basic Food, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) make it possible for very low-income individuals and families to meet the basic necessities of life. Budget cuts to these programs over the past few years have reduced available options and put thousands of families throughout the state at risk.