

HOUSING SERVICES CONSORTIUM

The Housing Services Consortium is a collaborative effort by local social service agencies to provide an integrated array of housing services to low-income residents of Washington County. For the past seven (7) years the Consortium has received \$60,000 annually in core support from CDBG funds. This CDBG funding leverages about \$177,850 annually from other funding sources.

The Consortium was developed as a result of the County's recognition that needed housing services were not being provided or were not readily available to County residents. The County requested that WCCAO organize the provision of such services. What has resulted is a service delivery model that emphasizes coordination, teamwork, and partnership that focuses on service delivery, inter-agency communication, and collaborative efforts to bring additional housing resources into the County. WCCAO, in addition to providing Fair Housing services acts as the contractor to the County, and in turn administers five subcontracts with the other Consortium housing providers.

The CDBG-funded Housing Services Consortium agencies include:

Washington County Community Action Organization, which provides Fair Housing assistance, Fair Housing complaint processing, and community education activities. WCCAO complements these services by providing related services in the areas of housing location, rent assistance and emergency shelter and case management services. WCCAO serves as manager of the Consortium by administering and monitoring agency contracts, maintaining statistics and chairing Housing Services Consortium meetings. WCCAO has received \$13,315 annually in CDBG funds to provide information to 667 individuals, process discrimination complaints, and present six community workshops. WCCAO has received \$3,423 for managing the Consortium contracts and activities.

Oregon Legal Services operates a tenant hotline to provide information on tenants' rights and responsibilities and provides legal assistance when appropriate. These services have been critical in preventing wrongful evictions and resulting homelessness. Oregon Legal Services has received \$11,800 annually in CDBG funds to serve 720 tenant households and carry out various community education activities.

Shared Housing Program conducts in-depth interviews to facilitate home sharing matches for low income individuals. A particular focus is matching elderly homeowners with low-income tenants, who pay reduced rents in exchange for performing housework/yard work, running errands, and/or providing personal assistance. The Shared Housing Program has received \$4762 annually in CDBG funds to provide information to 216 individuals and make 100 home sharing matches.

Access Oregon which provides housing location assistance and tenant advocacy for physically and mentally disabled tenants. The program also provides technical assistance to landlords, Realtors and developers in developing accessible housing resources. Access Oregon has received \$11,300 annually in CDBG funds to assist 130 disabled individuals and provide information to 80 providers and housing industry professionals and conduct two workshops.

Housing Services of Oregon, the county's only HUD-certified counseling agency, offers a continuum of services to prevent mortgage foreclosure, including budget management counseling and budget monitoring, negotiation and advocacy with lenders, linking homeowners with the HUD Assignment Program, and following-up to provide additional support as needed. Housing Services of Oregon has received \$6,000 annually in CDBG funds to assist 75 homeowners.

Washington County Health and Human Services locates housing for mentally ill clients and assists clients in maintaining this housing. They have received \$9,400 annually in CDBG funds to assist 75 mentally ill individuals.

HOUSING SERVICES CONSORTIUM MODEL

- ◆ The Consortium Model emphasizes collaboration and team work to better serve clients.

For example Housing Services of Oregon encourages mortgage default clients to consider home sharing as an option for increased income, and in turn the Shared Housing Program works to facilitate home sharing matches for these clients.

- ◆ The Consortium Model involves other providers not receiving CDBG funds in a network focusing on increase communication and identifying opportunities for partnerships.

Consortium agencies include the ARC of Washington County, the Neighborhood Mediation Program, the Domestic Violence Resource Center, Homestreet, County Department of Aging Services, and DHS.

- ◆ The Consortium Model has been effective in leveraging additional funds for enhanced as well as new housing services.

Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention has been expanded through a \$300,000 grant from the N. W. Area Foundation. A bilingual Tenant Hotline, outreach to Hispanic domestic violence victims, a day shelter are among the services funded through \$150,000 annually in State EHA funds.

- ◆ The Consortium Model has been effective in increasing community education activities through joint agency sponsorship of events.
- ◆ The Consortium Model has been effective in coordinating public advocacy efforts.

Consortium members were actively included in efforts to create the Oregon Housing Trust Fund. During the last Housing Lobby Day in Salem, Washington County had the largest citizen delegation of any County in the State.

- * The Consortium model has created an effective and efficient services system network for Washington County low income residents

Washington County Community Action Organization's Fair Housing Services

1. Direct Assistance to Clients

- ◆ Provide information about Fair Housing rights and responsibilities to tenants, landlords, home buyers and Realtors.
- ◆ Make referrals to HUD, the Oregon Civil Rights Division, testing services, private attorneys and mediators. Assist in preparing and processing complaint forms.
- ◆ Contact landlords to explain Fair Housing law and warn them of consequences of their actions when appropriate.
- ◆ Assist in enforcement efforts when appropriate (preparing affidavits, etc.).
- ◆ Follow-up with clients, enforcement agencies, mediators and attorneys as needed.

2. Outreach and Education

- ◆ Disseminate Fair Housing brochures to all WCCAO clients.
- ◆ Make presentations to protected class groups and advocacy groups.
- ◆ Organize workshops and seminars for landlords, property managers and Realtors. Target smaller unaffiliated landlords.
- ◆ Assist in planning annual Oregon Fair Housing conferences.
- ◆ Develop educational materials as needed.
- ◆ Promote and schedule "Anywhere but Here: The History of Housing Discrimination in Oregon" exhibit to schools, libraries, conferences, government buildings and community centers.
- ◆ Solicit proclamations and other support from Washington County and cities in the county on Fair Housing rights.
- ◆ Develop articles and ads on Fair Housing rights, responsibilities and services in local media.

3. Coordination with Other Fair Housing Supporters

- ◆ Chair regular meetings of Fair Housing providers in Portland metropolitan area.
- ◆ Participate on Portland Community Housing Resource Board.
- ◆ Recruit Washington County residents to participate in Fair Housing Council or Oregon Tester trainings.
- ◆ Participate in regional, statewide and national Fair Housing advocacy efforts.

**HOUSING SERVICE CONSORTIUM
WCCAO ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES**

1. Serves as single grantee to Washington County.
2. Prepares annual contracts with housing service subcontractors.
3. Provides fiscal services to administer subcontracts.
4. Monitors subcontractors annually for fiscal and program compliance with federal requirements.
5. Chairs regular meetings of Consortium.
6. Provides lead staff role for collaborative Consortium projects and activities.
7. Provides lead role in planning for resource development activities.
8. Provides technical assistance as required to subgrantees.