



April 18, 2016

City of Olympia , City Council
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98507

RE: Proposed amendments to the Community Development Block Grant 2015

Dear Mayor Selby and Council Members,

Homes First! creates safe, healthy, and affordable rental homes for those who need them most. We believe everyone needs to be in a home to build a successful life and a successful community. We are concerned to see that you have not made creating more affordable housing one of your priorities with your excess of 2015 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds.

Traditionally in our region, at least a portion of all CDBG funds have been used to ensure those who are most challenged to find and maintain housing, have additional opportunities to sustain a home in our neighborhoods. In fact, the City of Olympia has contributed to the funding of many of those homes over the years. At a time when we are in the middle of a housing crisis, we urge you to consider redirecting some of your additional, unplanned CDBG funds to housing needs. Although we understand the need for economic development, we would remind you of those you represent who, without safe, healthy, and affordable homes, are unable to participate in the economic success of our city.

- **Success begins at home.** People who live in a home do better at work and are more engaged with the world around them.
- **Education begins at home.** Children in stable homes learn and achieve more in school. A home helps level the playing field. Children deserve a chance to succeed in school and in life, which all begins with their family being able to afford a decent place to live.
- **Good Health begins at home.** Healthy habits are more accessible when you live in a stable, affordable home. Children get the healthy start they need.
- **Public Safety begins at home.** When people have a home they can count on, a stronger sense of community keeps streets, neighborhoods, and communities safer.
- **A Strong Economy begins at home.** At all income levels, people living in a home can afford more. Local job growth and a strong economy start at home. It should be possible for working people to afford housing and still have enough money for the basics like groceries, gas, and childcare.

It's better for society, the environment, and families if people can afford to live close to where they work. You need to start at home to realize the promise of a vibrant community. Please consider addressing our housing crisis with your additional CDBG funds.

Your partner in housing,

Trudy Soucoup, Executive Director

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