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Mr. Jim Cooper, Councilmember  
City of Olympia  
601 4th Ave. E.  
Olympia, WA 98501

February 17, 2015

Dear Jim,

Since our formation in 1990, Homes First!, has been designated a community housing development organization (CHDO) by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As a non-profit low-income rental housing provider for Thurston County, we have purchased, renovated, and maintained homes for over 3,000 of our neighbors. At this time, we respectfully request of \$50,000 from the City of Olympia for our next exciting project: the purchase and renovation of a local motel into 35 units of permanent supportive housing.

Homes First! will be the owner and manager of the renovated Holly Landing (currently Holly Motel) in Olympia and partner with other local organizations (Community Housing Partnership) to provide supports to our tenants. Your support will allow us to leverage other local and state resources to provide a fresh start to our hardest to house neighbors in our community.

The Thurston County Board of Health's initiative to increase community engagement around health priorities, known as **Thurston Thrives**, includes a goal to create permanent supportive housing for people who are chronically homeless. The Thurston County **HOME Consortium** has also set a priority to "create permanent supportive housing opportunities to alleviate impact on jails, hospitals, police, fire, medics, downtown and businesses."

In the interest of meeting these shared goals, this proposal outlines a cooperative project to house the highest need members of our community and details a course of action in addressing this serious housing, health, and services gap in the greater Olympia area.

**Our Project**

Our intent is to convert the property currently known as the Holly Motel into **35 units of supportive housing with an onsite counselling center which is staffed 24/7**. The single-person efficiency units will stabilize housing and health for 35 chronically homeless people. With appropriate supports, this permanent housing can serve as a foundation for rehabilitation, therapy, and improved health.



## Our Purpose

The purpose of developing the Holly Landing is to create much needed supportive housing opportunities for chronically homeless people. The Community Housing Partnership is committed to creating supportive housing that will:

1. **Reduce costs** to our systems of care by alleviating pressure on law enforcement, jails, hospitals and businesses,
2. **Provide services** to address mental and physical health of residents, and that
3. **Provides opportunities** for residents to live healthier and fuller lives.

## Our Results

The Partnership aims to:

1. **Stabilize housing** and health for 35 chronically homeless people.
2. **Support 35 residents** in stabilizing their lives with on-site professional support services for mental health, physical health and recovery via partnerships with local providers
3. **Reduce costs** to other systems of care such as law enforcement, hospitals and businesses.

## Our Collaboration

Thurston County is home to dozens of non-profit organizations. One of the most important aspects of Holly Landing involves forming a web of non-profits in collaboration with for-profit entities in the county who wish to **work together to make an impact** on housing affordability, housing stability, and quality of life for our community's most vulnerable citizens. Current Partners in this project include:

- Homes First! – Property Owner & Manager
- Behavioral Health Resources– Lead Social Service Agency & Mental Health Case Management
- Housing Authority of Thurston County – Rental Subsidy Provider
- Thurston County Department of Health & Human Services
- NW Resources – Chemical Dependency Support
- Olympia Free Clinic – Physical Health Support
- Sidewalk (a subsidiary of Interfaith Works) – Coordinated Entry for Adults without Children

## Reducing Costs

Chronically homeless people are among the most vulnerable people in the homeless population. They tend to have high rates of behavioral health problems, including severe mental illness and substance abuse disorders, conditions that may be exacerbated by physical illness, injury or trauma. Consequently, they are frequent users of emergency services, crisis response, and public safety systems.

Chronically homeless individuals living in permanent supportive housing are far less likely to draw on expensive public services. They are also less likely to end up in homeless shelters, emergency rooms, or jails, none of which are effective interventions for chronic homelessness. **Public costs – whether local, state or federal – are therefore reduced.**

Permanent supportive housing can produce dramatic results. A famous study in the Journal of American Medicine [\(Mary E. Larimer, et al., 2009\)](#) of the 1811 Eastlake program in Seattle, WA, which provides



housing to homeless people with the most extensive health problems, found that the program saved nearly \$30,000 per tenant per year in publicly-funded services, all while achieving better housing and health outcomes for the tenants.

*Drexel House, a local supportive housing provider is an example of best practices in this area. It provides supportive housing for chronically homeless people at a cost of **\$64 per person per day** while the cost to jail a person is \$92 per day and the cost of a hospital stay is \$2,500 per day.*

### **Providing Services and Opportunities**

Connecting chronically homeless people to services that support their mental health, their physical health and that support recovery is the number two benefit of supportive housing. Research shows that, for chronically homeless individuals, **stable housing is an essential component of successful recovery**. The solution to the problem of chronic homelessness is permanent supportive housing, which is housing coupled with supportive services. With appropriate supports, permanent housing can serve as a foundation for rehabilitation, therapy, and improved health.

### **About Homes First!**

Homes First! builds, acquires, renovates, and preserves affordable rental housing for low and extremely income families, individuals, and people with special needs. Currently we own and manage 71 rental units. Income from rent goes to maintain the housing, provide staff oversight, and help fund future affordable housing projects.

Our power is in our partnerships. Rather than trying to be both a housing and social service provider, we concentrate on what we are good at – being a great property owner and landlord. This allows our partners to focus on what they are good at – providing supportive services to our tenants.

### **Homes First! Current Programs**

Homes First! owns and manages a variety of low-income homes. We have several kinds of living spaces available and they are managed in a variety of ways.

#### **1. Project Based Voucher Homes**

These scattered site houses and apartment vacancies are applied for through the Housing Authority of Thurston County ([www.hatc.org](http://www.hatc.org)). The Housing Authority of Thurston County manages applications and any waitlists when applicable.

#### **2. HF! Directly-Managed Residences**

These scattered site houses and apartments are managed directly through Homes First! who accepts applications for the spaces only when there are vacancies. Many other local social service agencies work with us to place their clients in our homes.

#### **3. Oxford Houses**

Although owned and maintained by Homes First! tenant applications are managed through the Oxford House Program ([www.OxfordHouse.org](http://www.OxfordHouse.org)). Oxford House is a concept in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. In its simplest form, an Oxford House describes a democratically run, self-supporting, and drug free home.

#### **4. Group Living for Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

Although owned & maintained by Homes First!, case management services are provided by five organizations who specialize in working with adults developmental disabilities. Applications for



available spaces are managed directly with each service provider. Kokua ([www.kokuaservices.org](http://www.kokuaservices.org)), LGH Residential ([www.lghres.com](http://www.lghres.com)), Community Resources ([www.community-resources.com](http://www.community-resources.com)), Place One ([www.placeoneinc.com](http://www.placeoneinc.com)), and new in 2014 - Aacres ([www.aacresllc.com](http://www.aacresllc.com)).

**Staff, Volunteers, and Relationships**

Homes First! is proud to say that we have managed for most of our history, to operate our organization’s administrative needs solely on earned income from rent. Our income covers the salaries and benefits for our three full-time administrative staff and one maintenance technician, along with the costs of running an office and maintaining 71 units in 26 properties. We will be adding our 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> homes in February 2015!

Homes First! has always worked closely with other local non-profit and for-profit organizations to fulfill our mission:

- organizations like YouthBuild (<https://youthbuild.org/siteview/1147/info>) and ReBuilding Together (<http://www.oly-wa.us/RebuildingTogether>) to develop properties.
- organizations like the Housing Authority of Thurston County, the Family Support Center, Behavioral Health Resources and the Community Action Council to ensure that our community has the services it needs to support its low-income and special needs citizens and to provide social services for our tenants.

Homes First! also works with a variety of volunteers from around the community including those from faith communities and service organizations, to maintain our properties and provide office support. In 2014, we also joined with WorkSource to provide on the job training to individuals who are struggling to gain skills and return to the workforce. We hope to have more volunteer opportunities in the future as we move toward more new construction.

**Funding Request**

Homes First! continues to operates primarily on earned income. 92% of our revenue is earned through rental income. This rental income covers 100% of our administrative costs so that the other 8%, which comes from a variety of federal, state and local grants along with individual, group, and corporate donations, can go directly back to property development.

For such a small organization, we have done an amazing job over the last 25 years, of surviving in a variety of housing markets. However, to be in a position to not only provide our unique service to our current tenants but also thrive and mature to meet the growing needs of the community, a significant influx of unrestricted funds is required.

Therefore, this request concentrates on increasing our ability to raise unrestricted capital.

**Project Budget** – *comprehensive budget attached*

Budget	Total	Request to City of Olympia	Homes First! Match	Thurston County Match	Request to Local Family Foundations & Cities	Request to Providence Foundation	Request to Medina Foundation	Request to Norcliffe Foundation
Purchase & Rehab	\$1,750,000	\$50,000	\$650,000	\$50,000	\$675,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$25,000

**Please Note:** The Community Housing Partnership is approaching other funders for support of the



rehabilitation and soft costs for this project.

## **Evaluation**

The Community Housing Partnership understands the importance of constantly working at Quality Improvement. This entails working to improve both process and outcomes that reflect a philosophy that regular attention to processes and outcomes leads to better quality service for tenants, and ultimately, a better quality of life.

A robust a quality assurance system will help the service and housing providers do the following:

- Diagnose our program's strengths and weaknesses;
- Identify problem areas quickly, so that solutions can be developed;
- Formulate action plans for improving our program;
- Recognize staff achievements;
- Make information available for reports, bids, and proposals; and
- Help clients/tenants achieve their goals for recovery.

Capitol Recover Center, the lead social service organization on the project, is developing a fidelity scale and general organizational Index (GOI) specifically for permanent supportive housing at Holly Landing. A fidelity scale is a tool for determining how a program measures up to an ideal model of Permanent Supportive Housing, based on ongoing research and expert consensus.

The GOI measures an the capacity to implement evidence-based and promising practices, such as Permanent Supportive Housing, Supported Employment, and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT). The GOI examines factors such as whether clients receive individualized, written plans; whether employees receive preliminary and ongoing training; and whether supervisors meet regularly with employees to review work. These tools are useful for both internal and external evaluations.

The fidelity scale and GOI provide basic guidelines for program evaluation, but collecting specific information about the program and the people who participate in the program can provide a fuller picture of how well it meets the basic goals of Permanent Supportive Housing. Some information that will be gathered for analysis includes the following:

- Number of tenant/client contacts with case manager within last 90 days;
- Number of housing units to which tenants have legal rights of tenancy;
- Number of people entering housing with no demonstration of housing readiness;
- Percentage of participants paying 30 percent or less of income toward rent plus basic utilities.
- Some outcome measures tracked by Permanent Supportive Housing programs are the following:
- Days housed in last 90 days, 180 days, etc.;
- Tenure in current housing situation;
- Tenure in program;
- Days hospitalized in last 90 days;
- Number of hospitalizations in last 90 days;
- Days in jail in last 90 days;
- Mental health functioning;
- Social functioning;
- Substance abuse reported;
- Income;
- Benefits eligibility (Medicaid, SSI, Food Stamps, etc.);
- Employment rate;



- Participation in education;
- Participation in social activities outside the program;
- Self-reported quality of life;
- Self-reported consumer satisfaction

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal. We hope you will choose to invest in Homes First! and the constituencies we seek to serve. Please contact me if you have any questions or input regarding this request.

Best regards,



Trudy Soucoup

Executive Director

Direct: 360-915-7513

Email: [executivedirector@homesfirst.org](mailto:executivedirector@homesfirst.org)

*501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. #94-3124800. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

