

December 12, 2017

Tacoma area Senators and Representatives:

We are taking the unusual step of jointly writing to implore our Tacoma legislative delegation to pass state's 2017-19 capital budget *in the first week of the 2018 session*. The funds that support the development of affordable housing, and particularly deeply affordable housing for families coming out of homelessness, are crucially needed for projects to go forward by the deadline established by the Housing Finance Commission.

If this budget is not passed before January 17, 2018, the majority of projects that will serve homeless families will not be able to move forward this year. The Commission has ruled that it will not accept applications for Low-income Housing Tax Credits from projects that require Housing Trust Fund as part of their financing package.

We know you care about the citizens of this state, or you would not be in public service. What we ask you to do is to move quickly so that more families have a safe place to call home.

The YWCA of Pierce County is currently poised to build 50 units of deeply affordable housing, with 38 of those units set aside to serve the homeless population. In particular, the YWCA serves those who are homeless due to domestic violence. If no capital budget is passed before January 17th, it will delay this project for at least a year. This delay will raise costs due to construction escalation, but more importantly it will leave domestic violence survivors and their children in unsafe conditions, literally out in the cold. The YWCA is the largest provider of services to domestic violence survivors and their children in Pierce County and serves many citizens from your respective districts.

Homelessness is a public health crisis, so much so that it has been declared a state of emergency in the City of Tacoma, but it is at epidemic rates all across our state. We know that we can do better for our most vulnerable citizens. Getting and keeping people housed doesn't just improve conditions for them, it improves the whole community. There is no time to lose.

We are counting on you to pass the capital budget immediately, as your very first order of business.

Best regards,