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It Wins Increased Funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund in Washington, D.C.

by Michael Anderson // 2014, Summer

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The Housing for All Campaign in Washington, D.C. is celebrating the D.C. Council approval of a \$79.3 million commitment to the Housing Production Trust Fund for FY2015. The increase comes as a result of both the D.C. Mayor and Council identifying additional funds beyond previously dedicated revenue. The Mayor committed over \$30 million from current-year surplus and the Council committed \$8.7 million from unspent capital dollars in the Department of Behavioral Health budget. (These funds would have been lost absent the transfer to the trust fund, but they are still dedicated to the production of housing for people with serious mental or emotional illness.) This, plus \$40 million in dedicated revenue from the D.C. Deed Transfer and Recordation Tax will provide a total of \$79.3 million next year.

The budget win was the result of a year-long campaign to raise the visibility of the trust fund, with the goal of achieving \$100 million this year and in future years. This winter, members of the D.C. Council expressed their support for \$100 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund in public forums across the District. Councilmembers stood in support of CNHED’s housing priorities at the Housing For All NOW Rally on February 1, 2014. The event stressed the importance of \$100 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund. *In March, the Campaign delivered a letter to Mayor Gray signed by 60 organizations in support of committing \$100 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund this year, and every year, by increasing the amount of ongoing and one-time funding.* The Housing For All Campaign will continue to advocate to reach the \$100 million floor to serve DC’s growing housing needs.

The Campaign was launched by the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development, which is a membership association that leads nonprofit community development organizations in ensuring that residents with low and moderate incomes have housing and economic opportunities in neighborhoods throughout the District of Columbia. The campaign is made up of the people who work at

affordable housing nonprofits, people living in affordable homes, and concerned D.C. residents. This is a tremendous victory for CNHED’s housing advocacy given that the total available in the Trust Fund next year is more than double what would be available solely from dedicated revenues.

The Campaign believes the D.C. government should invest in the programs that make a full Continuum of Housing affordable for District residents. These programs include the Housing Production Trust Fund, the Home Purchase Assistance Program, the Local Rent Supplement Program, and the Permanent Supportive Housing Program. The Campaign will continue to call on the Council to increase the total Housing Production Trust Fund commitment to \$100 million annually.

Housing for All states that the Housing Production Trust Fund is the backbone of housing preservation and development in the District. The Fund is crucial to keeping and expanding the affordable housing needed for D.C. families and individuals. The Trust Fund plays a key role in:

- The preservation of existing affordable housing,
- Building new affordable housing to rent or purchase,
- Reaching production goals to end chronic homelessness by 2020, and
- Allowing tenants to purchase their buildings and preserve it as affordable.

D.C. communities continue to suffer from a lack of affordable housing. More than 7,000 people are homeless in this nation’s capital. One in five D.C. households pays more than half of their income for rent, including many seniors. *“The Housing Production Trust Fund is a critical tool to serve D.C.’s housing needs, helping families and individuals find and keep housing opportunities in the District,”* says Bob Pohlman, Executive Director of CNHED.

The Housing Production Trust Fund provides loans and grants to both nonprofit and for-profit developers of affordable housing in the District of Columbia, for new construction and preservation. It is funded primarily by a dedicated revenue stream of 15% of the D.C. Deed Transfer and Recordation Tax, and is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The trust fund supports housing that serves households at 0-80% of the area median income, which helps to keep residents from being displaced from D.C.’s changing neighborhoods. The Housing Production Trust Fund funds a variety of housing opportunities that would not otherwise exist.

The Trust Fund has already produced and preserved more than 7,500 affordable homes serving 15,000 people with a diversity of housing needs.

Contact: Robert Pohlman, Executive Director, Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development, 1432 U Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202-745-0902) <http://www.cnhed.org/>



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