



*Housing Oregon
Board members:*

March 16, 2020

*Sheila Stiley,
Board chair – NW
Coastal Housing*

Governor Kate Brown
Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden
Representatives Blumenauer, Bonamici, DeFazio, Schrader, Walden
Senate President Peter Courtney
House Speaker Tina Kotek
Chair Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland

*Diane Linn,
Vice-chair - Proud
Ground*

*Travis Phillips,
Secretary –
Catholic Charities
of Oregon*

In response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, state and local emergency declarations, Housing Oregon calls for affordable housing providers, state and local jurisdictions to implement the following actions in order to ensure housing stability for low-income families who may be disproportionately impacted by loss of income during this crisis and in turn may have difficulty paying rent.

*Trell Anderson,
Treasurer –NW
Housing
Alternatives*

*Rachael Duke -
Community
Partners for
Affordable Housing*

Housing Oregon members and other affordable housing providers offer and are expanding flexible payment plans for residents in unsubsidized units who are able to manage a payment plan without undue burden. However, in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency, we need an industry wide response to ensure people earning low incomes don't lose their housing as a result of this public health emergency. Affordable housing residents and participants may lose income as a result of required quarantine due to illness, inability to report to work due to a child home from school, business closures or reduction in working hours without paid sick leave.

*Ernesto Fonseca -
Hacienda CDC*

*Nkenge Harmon
Johnson – Urban
League of Portland*

Housing Oregon calls upon affordable housing providers to adopt policies and actions including:

*Sean Hubert-
Central City
Concern*

*Richard Morrow –
Columbia Cascade
Housing Corp.*

- Waiving late fees due to late monthly rental payments from tenants in unsubsidized housing units whose income is impacted by COVID-19.
- A 30-day moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent due to loss of income associated with COVID-19, which may be extended as necessary depending on the duration of the public emergency.

*Arielle Reid –
NeighborWorks
Umpqua*

*Lisa Rogers –
CASA of Oregon*

Housing Oregon calls upon local, state and federal programs:

- To allocate emergency funding to cover lost rental income to ensure an eviction moratorium for non-payment of rent and/or

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utilities for tenants does not impact agencies' ability to provide other support services on site and continue current efforts at housing stabilization and eviction prevention. Priority should be for regulated affordable housing projects which are the least financially resilient multi-family projects in Oregon due to capped rents, higher staffing and services costs, and housing Oregon's most vulnerable citizens.

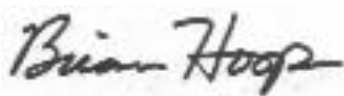
- Provide regulatory relief allowing for changes in property management and operations to support social distancing efforts including suspending compliance requirements for:
 - Annual income rectifications,
 - Compliance-related unit inspections,
 - In-unit maintenance compliance responses – maintain life and safety maintenance,
 - Allowing residents to refuse entry without being notified of a lease violation.

- Provide financial waivers so properties/owners can accommodate lack of income if not collecting rent payments:
 - Suspend all cash flow split requirements,
 - Evaluate and suspend or amend financial compliance and thresholds regarding operating reserves and other property performance indicators,
 - Suspend monthly/annual allocations to operating and capital reserves.

- Advocate with private financial investors and institutions, the IRS and HUD:
 - Call upon the IRS to amend/suspend/change Section 42 compliance components related to financial issues of tax credit properties, as well as the requirement for annual income verifications,
 - Call upon HUD for the same,
 - Call upon the financial industry, banks, and lenders to consider items listed above,
 - Organizing calls or video meetings with our congressional delegation.

Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of affordable housing community development corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. This position was taken by the Board of Directors at their March 16, 2020 meeting.

Sincerely,



Brian Hoop
Director, Housing Oregon



Sheila Stiley
Executive Director, NW Coastal Housing
Board Chair, Housing Oregon

cc: Margaret Salazar, Director, Oregon Housing and Community Services
Shannon Callahan, Director, Portland Housing Bureau
Laure Rawson, Director, Oregon, U.S. Dept. Housing and Urban Development
City Councils of Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford, Bend