

MEMORANDUM

TO: AHA Joint Board

FROM: Chris Collier, AHA Program Manager

DATE: May 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to AHA Work Plan / Budget, Changes to AHA

Executive Summary

It is advised that the AHA Joint Board restructure the AHA Work Plan and Budget to specify that standard deliverables of data and reporting/consultation shall be provided by HASCO instead of the AHA Program Manager. This change will not affect AHA members or the work received or AHA dues for FY26. The rationale for this change is that to further implement AHA's goal of increasing housing accessibility for all, AHA members need a broader suite of services and knowledge than can be provided by one individual (the AHA Program Manager), and that this change is the most effective way to accomplish that.

The AHA Program Manager position will be changed in the AHA budget to "HASCO Expenses" (or similar), and the primary point of contact between HASCO and AHA will be the HASCO Government Relations position, which is currently being created at HASCO. While the GR position will be the primary point of contact, AHA members will be able to access a broader range of expertise and knowledge at HASCO that a singular staff person (the AHA Program Manager) cannot provide.

Background

When AHA was first studied in 2008, the Great Recession was ravaging the nation and Snohomish County with financial instability, foreclosure, and economic malaise. Today, the nation is gripped by a crisis of rapidly rising housing prices, far beyond what a majority of households, Snohomish County being no exception, can pay, either to rent or to own.

The Snohomish County HO-5 report puts this into crystal clarity with over 160,000 additional units of housing needed by 2044, at a variety of income levels. Even producing half that number in the next 19 years would be a tremendous achievement. Snohomish County cities, often in partnership with AHA, have taken great strides in setting policy conditions for land use, building and permitting, to meet this need. Data shows, however, that development is rapidly decreasing in Snohomish County, despite favorable conditions from 2015-2022, which are currently waning.

New approaches are needed to meet the current scope and impacts of the housing crisis, once "contained" to households of Very Low Income and below. One such approach is Snohomish County jurisdictions, AHA members, having a closer working relationship with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO), already AHA's Administrative and Fiscal Agent. The following is advised by AHA's Program Manager, in furtherance of AHA's founding mission, to improve housing affordability for all peoples and income levels in Snohomish County, current and future. This mission, in recognition of the above, leads me to a place to recommend the following:

Proposed Changes

First and foremost, the AHA ILA shall remain unchanged, the AHA Joint Board will remain (as well as Chair/Vice Chair), meet quarterly, and discuss an annual Work Plan and Dues. However, by vote of the Joint Board, AHA will amend the FY26 Work Plan and Budget as follows:

1. The AHA Work Plan will have a preamble clarifying that services described will be provided by HASCO, not specifically the AHA Program Manager.
2. On the FY26 budget, “1.0 FTE Program Manager” and “Fringe Benefits @39%” will be combined and retitled “HASCO Servies” (or similar) expense line item. Travel and software/consulting will remain as discrete line items.
3. The responsibilities of the AHA Program Manager is to be transferred to HASCO’s new position, Government Relations Director. The position’s duties will include being the primary point of contact for AHA members and meeting HASCO’s obligations to AHA (described in the Work Plan). Requests for additional work outside the scope of the AHA Work Plan will go through, but not strictly be completed, by the Government Relations Director.

Benefits

There are major benefits to making the changes described above:

1. AHA Members will not experience a change to the services they receive or can expect to receive. These services are just to be provided by HASCO instead of the AHA Program Manager.
2. AHA in the past has explored how to add staff capacity and found the dues increase to members a non-starter. The proposed changes provide a solution by expanding the knowledge base AHA members can access - all HASCO staff, instead of just AHA’s Program Manager.
3. Members now are able to consult with HASCO (an option to be well advertised and maintained by the Government Relations position), in matters of property development, finance, services, and more. (See Attachment A for a list of current HASCO competencies.)
4. This restructuring gives HASCO the opportunity and staff capacity to advocate for housing policy changes and funds that will allow HASCO to better complete its mission, to the cities’ benefit.

Conclusion

As the scope and intensity of the housing crisis change, so must structures designed to respond to it. Recognizing circumstances, some of which are unique to Snohomish County, and advising appropriate action on them is a part of the AHA Program Manager’s duties. HASCO has a wide breadth of knowledge in its staff, beyond what the AHA Program Manager can provide, and this knowledge needs to be made available to AHA members. AHA should remain as a reliable conduit for cities to access that information through the HASCO Government Relations position. This proposal is one that is allowed by the wording of AHA’s ILA, State law, and by leadership at HASCO.

Attachment A - Housing Authority of Snohomish County Competencies & Skills List

Community Services

- Client housing service navigation
- Community events and activities
- Supporting vulnerable populations through connection to services (on-site and otherwise)

Communications

- External communications
- Community event coordination

Development, Construction, Asset Management

- Site viability & analysis
- Municipal code review for affordable housing projects
- Property acquisition (see finance)
- Property rehabilitation
- Construction cost analysis and subcontracting; federal law compliance
- Property management (direct and via contract)
- USDA Rural Development compliance and administration
- Maintenance of in-house managed properties
- Capital budget management and planning
- Procurement

Finance

- Low-income housing finance (LIHTC, State Housing Trust Fund, other)
- Debt structuring & financial markets/analysis
- Audit completion and financial compliance

Government Relations

- Analysis of federal and state legislative changes (including funding and budgets)
- Legislative policy setting and advocacy
- Communicating and presenting to various stakeholders across the county

Human Resources & Miscellaneous (Legal)

- Organizational scaling
- Staff development, Recruiting/onboarding, Office management
- Employment law compliance
- Fair housing/Reasonable accommodation review

Tenant Based Assistance Department

- Administration & monitoring of housing vouchers (Housing Choice, Family Unification, Veterans Assistance, Emergency Housing, Non-Elderly Disabled, etc.)
- Client intake/onboarding/moving/porting
- Interim/Annual certification and program compliance
- Unit inspection prior/post lease-up by voucher holder (safe/decent/sanitary dwelling)
 - Customer service and reasonable accommodations within program guidelines