

Appendix 1 to AP-12: Public Comments

Public Comments and Responses
 2021 Annual Action Plan
 Public Hearing, December 10, 2020
 Public Hearing, April 6, 2021
 30-Day Public Comment Period - March 25, 2021, through April 23, 2021

#1	Comment	HSD Response
	<p>Gretchen Bennett: I looked at the County website for an appropriate contact for my concern and saw you shown as the contact for comments relating to community development needs and use of federal funds. The federal money aspect is the most salient from my position.</p> <p>The terrible events last year near Harvey's Lounge involving Black kids and threat of violence, the county's decision not to prosecute, and a shut out of the families have remained top of mind, defining Snohomish County for me and thousands of North King County residents. Think, please, of your businesses and services. Your official actions suggest that Snohomish County has no interest in equality for minorities. Neither protection of the law, nor even decent behavior.</p> <p>To see a County that condones and perpetuates racially motivated behavior receive federal money is further upsetting.</p> <p>Will the federal money be used to advance beyond this seemingly systemic racial problem, to improve community justice for minorities? One notes the "services" component in your announcement.</p>	<p>Ms. Bennett's comments were in response to a Public Notice announcing a public hearing and inviting comments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program performance for the 2019 program year, and ➤ Planning for the 2021 Annual Action Plan. <p>Federal funding referred to in the Public Notice is received by Snohomish County Consortium (Consortium), an entitlement community. The Consortium is a partnership between Snohomish County and most of the cities and towns within the County. The partnership is established through an Interlocal Agreement and allows the Consortium, as an Urban County, to receive approximately \$5 million dollars in federal funding each year as formula grants under Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs.</p> <p>The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awards annual grants to entitlement communities and states throughout the United States, to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.</p>

		<p>To receive these funds, the Consortium is required to develop a five-year consolidated plan to guide investment of the funds on an annual basis, which is implemented through five one-year annual action plans.</p> <p>Funding for public services is primarily targeted to low- and very low-income households, families and individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and non-homeless persons with special needs. For example, in the 2021 program year, the types of public service projects proposed for funding include emergency shelters, rapid rehousing programs, senior housing support, food and nutrition services, and fair housing counseling and education.</p>
#2	<p>Deb Fulwiler: Deb submitted a written comment after the December 20, 2020, public hearing in response to a request for public comment on affordable housing in Snohomish County. Commenter indicated that she had been a single mother and was now a retired person and was never able to afford a home of her own. After applying to several purchase assistance programs, found it frustrating when hearing about, or being informed of, potential homeownership opportunities, but then later finding that they fell through or were no longer available.</p> <p>Commenter stated “I was told by both HomeSight and Parkview services that I can purchase a mobile home under a certain age in good condition, but it cannot be in a park. With one exception which is Thomas Place at \$450/mo. I cannot afford the monthly cost of the mobile (which would have been around 700/mo) plus the pad rent. I only make around \$1700/mo and have insurance, gas, utilities (W/S/G are sometimes part of a pad fee....not always) phone, doctor bills and food, etc. to pay out of that. Why is it that I can be approved for a condo/townhouse that has monthly dues (which I probably can’t afford either) but not a mobile home</p>	<p>The County acknowledges that homebuyer assistance and down-payment assistance programs utilizing federal CDBG and HOME funds requires adherence to strict federal requirements which can be frustrating for homebuyers. Assisted homes must be in good condition, meet specific federal standards for safety, etc., and pass a home inspection.</p> <p>Homebuyer programs utilizing federal funds must navigate between the amount a homebuyer can afford to pay for housing costs, the amount of purchase assistance available, and the cost of housing in the area.</p> <p>CDBG and HOME funded homebuyer programs are intended to assist low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers to purchase a home they can afford, which typically requires paying no more than 30% of the household’s income for housing costs. The amount of subsidy required to reduce the housing cost to an amount the homebuyer can afford, has increased substantially in the last several years, especially for households with incomes at or below 50% and 30% of the area median income. In some cases, there is not enough funding available to make the home affordable to the homebuyer.</p>

	<p>park. Some of the mobiles that look decent in their photos are under \$100,000 and perhaps I could afford that payment plus the pad fee. I am approved for \$228,000 with Downpayment assistance in Snohomish County but can't find anything within that price range or the various entities guidelines of:</p> <p>No mobiles unless they are on their own land; No mobiles under a certain age; Mobiles must be in good condition; No foreclosure houses; and Stick home must be in good condition.</p> <p>I use a walker and would like to purchase a home within my income (not pay more than 30% of my income which is what Habitat offers). I need a garage, not only for extra storage, but for safety as well when taking things in and out of my car. I am an easy target since I move very slowly and cannot get around easily.</p> <p>An ideal situation would be for a subsidized mobile home park for seniors in Monroe or close by since you know their income is not going to change. The individuals could buy their own mobile homes and have them placed in this park and know that they can afford to live within their means instead of relying on their families or other entities to care for them.</p> <p>Finding affordable housing in Snohomish County has been an impossible task for me. I hope by telling my story you can see the pitfalls and hoops low income (especially seniors) are being asked to achieve."</p>	<p>The County appreciates the input provided and will continue to explore additional ways to improve and increase affordable housing options in our community.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Mr. Steve McGraw: Homage Senior Services has collaborated with Snohomish County for many years to assist our senior population and adults living with a disability, to live independently and with dignity in their homes. This partnership not only provides necessary</p>	<p>The County thanks Mr. McGraw for his comments and acknowledges the need for more resources to maintain existing affordable housing and to provide essential programs for vulnerable populations.</p>

resources to some of our most vulnerable community members; our services and programs help keep these families safe in their homes, while maintaining their affordability.

One way to increase affordable housing options is with public service programs, such as Homage Home Repair. Offering needed home repairs for these low-income residents not only sustains the integrity of the existing stock, but also mitigates the need to create costlier new housing and keeps existing housing affordable.

Additionally, CDBG funding can assist low-income community members, like our clients, with services that address food insecurity, mental health issue and general health and well-being. Our meal programs alone help seniors and people with disabilities across the county by providing access to food and chance to connect to their community.

Our partnership with Snohomish County, allows us to be able to help our clients stay proactive in maintaining their health and independence. Through our nutrition programs, social service programs, and our health and wellness programs we assist community members with reliable transportation for doctor's appointments, congregate meals, even peer counseling. Access to these services is invaluable to the older adults and adults with disabilities in our communities, to allow them to feel connected and valued.

The challenges brought on by COVID-19 last year, still remain and continue to highlight the necessity of these vital services for the health and well-being of the clients we serve, as well as the larger community. Homage's

The 2021 Annual Action Plan includes proposed funding for two Homage Senior Services programs:

1. Homeowner Minor Home Repair: An affordable housing program which provides health and safety repairs to homes owned and-occupied by low-income elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
2. Food and Nutrition Services: A public Service project which provides home delivered meals for home-bound seniors and people with disabilities, and freshly prepared hot meals at nine sites.

The County appreciates the many years of partnership and collaboration with Homage Senior Services and values their continued commitment and service to Snohomish County's most vulnerable populations.

	<p>partnership with the county will allow us all to work toward providing safe and affordable housing, and access to services that are a critical need in our community.</p>	
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