

## Agenda

Community Action Board of Directors

**Thursday, February 23, 5-6:30 pm**

**In Person Location:** Skagit Valley YMCA Community Room, 1901 Hoag Rd, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

**Our mission is to stabilize lives, equip people to meet their goals, and build a stronger, more equitable Skagit County.**

Our vision is a community in which everyone works together to end poverty in Skagit County.

### Welcome/introductions/sharing

**5:00 pm**

Consent Agenda				5:05 pm
Item	Action	Description		
2	Minutes	Information	Minutes from the January 26 Board of Directors Meeting	
3	Correspondence	Information	Email: Skagit County Homeless Housing NOFA and 50% reduction in doc fees	
			Skagit Valley Herald: Volunteers Take Part in Annual Homeless Count	
			King 5: Cold reality: Energy rates rise as temperatures fall	
4	Division Reports	Information	Reports from Melissa Self, Sandi Phinney, Yvonne Rynearson, Michele Metcalf, Philip Prud'homme, & Elizabeth Jennings	
5	Motions	Approve	Motion to approve Minutes of January 26 Board meeting	
		Approve	November Finance Report (through December 2022)	

Discussion Agenda					
Item	Action	Description	Responsible	Time	
	Board Exec and Planning & Engagement	Motion	Appointing Board Vice President; Latest on Cascade Landing & Kulshan View	Brocksmith; Metcalf	5:10
	Donor Development	Discussion	Spirit of Hope latest – Board roles in helping to fill the room and as ambassadors at the event	Bennett; Prud'homme	5:25
6	State of the agency	Briefing Update Motion	Review highlights from agency dashboard – update from Olympia; adding doc recording fee backfill to advocacy priorities	Henkel	5:50
7	Program Focus	Discussion	Coordinated Entry – challenges and solutions (and tie to Care Coordination and Outreach)	Self	6:00
	Adjourn				6:30

### Equity-Informed Decision-Making Questions

#### Broad Questions:

- How might this disproportionately affect people of color?
- Is it positive, negative, or neutral in dismantling system racism?

#### Specific questions for Committees to consider:

- **Equity:** What are the equity questions we should be asking about this decision?
- **Voice:** What do the people impacted have to say about this? What do our staff say? Who should be at the table?
- **Gaps:** What is our most vulnerable population, or what population isn't being served?
- **Data:** What does the data tell us? What don't we know, and how do we find out?
- **Asset map:** What are our partners doing? What do they think our role should be?



## Important Upcoming Dates: All are Invited

If you would like to get added to Committee Communications, please reach out to the following people:

- **Finance Committee:** Tari Caswell, [taric@communityactionskagit.org](mailto:taric@communityactionskagit.org)
  - **Board Planning & Engagement:** Sandi York, [sandiy@communityactionskagit.org](mailto:sandiy@communityactionskagit.org)
  - **Donor Development Committee:** Philip Prud'homme, [philipp@communityactionskagit.org](mailto:philipp@communityactionskagit.org)
  - **Housing Work Group:** Michele Metcalf, [michelem@communityactionskagit.org](mailto:michelem@communityactionskagit.org)
  - **Latinx Advisory Committee:** Isabela Ordonez, [isabelao@communityactionskagit.org](mailto:isabelao@communityactionskagit.org)
  - **Skagit Housing Consortium:** Matt Johnson Money: [matthew@skagit.org](mailto:matthew@skagit.org)
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### Tuesday February 21, 1-2:30 pm, Skagit Housing Consortium

- **Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85884254396?pwd=dHBsMUlxMjd6U2krSHJXMmcrbFQ2UT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 858 8425 4396
- **Passcode:** 595743
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Thursday February 23, 5-6:30 pm, Board Meeting- In Person!

- **Skagit Valley YMCA,** Community Room, 1901 Hoag Road, Mount Vernon WA 98273

### Tuesday February 28 3:30-5:00 pm, Donor Development Committee

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9436029776?pwd=bE5CckVhdTI5cXITSGxUT3ZwV3BEZ09>
- **Meeting ID:** 943 602 9776
- **Passcode:** 1234
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Wednesday March 1, 9-10 am, March Brunch & Learn: Advocacy

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85985412986?pwd=bGNJSFdjZGRLOVF4KzBSWnBGd20rdz09>

### Wednesday March 1, 3-4 pm, CREAT Committee

- **Zoom Link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87174559991?pwd=SFxOGpKS1dwZHI0c2xaOUNucWhCQT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 871 7455 999
- **Passcode:** 450580
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Friday March 3, 9:30 am- 10:30 am, Housing Work Group

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86951287129?pwd=VXhnTVRENUdKZldCMHBFSjZqdEM0QT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 869 5128 7129
- **Passcode:** 407622
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Wednesday March 8, 7:30-9 am, Board Executive Committee

- **Zoom Link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84754093621?pwd=elh5QjhVL2tEblRVaGRXK1BQQTJ1dz09>
- **Meeting ID:** 847 5409 3621
- **Passcode:** 155098
- **Call Information:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Thursday March 9, 8:30-9:30 am, Latinx Advisory Committee

- **Zoom Link:** <https://zoom.us/j/91488283677?pwd=aXpmdVNPa0FraFJ1Q3lrUUQ4cStMZz09>
- **Meeting ID:** 914 8828 3677
- **Passcode:** 022650
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Wednesday March 15, 3-4:30 pm, Finance Committee

- **Zoom Link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83625234998?pwd=R2pteHQwU2ZvdWR1ZEhlNjdKSFNoUT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 836 2523 4998
- **Passcode:** 909326
- **Call Information:** +1 (253) 215-8782

### Friday March 17, 9:30 am- 10:30 am, Housing Work Group

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86951287129?pwd=VXhnTVRENUdKZldCMHBFSjZqdEM0QT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 869 5128 7129
- **Passcode:** 407622
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

## Important Upcoming Dates: All are Invited

**Monday March 20, 4:30-5:30 pm, Board Planning and Engagement - please note time and Zoom link!**

**Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83551235291?pwd=dGpuL3gvLzJvRlBPd2s0RW5hUk9wdz09>

- **Meeting ID:** 835 5123 5291
- **Passcode:** 168564
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

**Tuesday March 21, 1-2:30 pm, Skagit Housing Consortium**

- **Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85884254396?pwd=dHBsMUlxMjd6U2krSHJXMmcrbFQ2UT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 858 8425 4396
- **Passcode:** 595743
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

**Tuesday March 23, 5-6:30 pm, March Board Meeting**

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792326464?pwd=bzdsZ1FxMVZpb2swTmxxYUlubzdSQT09>
- **Meeting ID:** 897 9232 6464
- **Passcode:** 955279
- **Phone:** +1 (253) 215-8782

**Thursday March 30, 5-7:45 pm, Spirit of Hope Fundraiser**

- Walton Event Center at Swinomish Casino & Lodge, 12885 Casino Dr, Anacortes, WA 98221
- [Register here!](#)





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 2023

CLIENT SECTOR MEMBERS		Term Ends
<b>LAC</b> <b>CREAT</b>	<b>KATI ORTIZ</b> Skagit Valley College (360) 421-4400   kati.ortiz@skagit.edu	Dec 2024
<b>Bd Plan &amp; Engmt</b> <b>CREAT</b> <b>Donor Develop</b>	<b>KAILA ROBERTS</b> Skagit Art Preschool (360) 488-7222   mrs.kailaroberts@hotmail.com	Dec 2024
<b>CREAT</b> <b>Donor Develop</b> <b>LAC</b>	<b>CHRISTINA SOLTERO</b> Burlington-Edison School District (360) 421-0704   csoltero@be.wednet.edu	Dec 2025
<b>CREAT</b>	<b>HEATHER WALLACE</b> Head Start Policy Council (360) 202-5895   heatherhelpsall@gmail.com	Dec 2025
PUBLIC SECTOR MEMBERS		Term Ends
<b>PRESIDENT</b> <b>Bd Plan &amp; Engmt</b> <b>Donor Develop</b> <b>Executive</b> <b>Finance</b> <b>Housing Devel</b>	<b>RICHARD BROCKSMITH</b> Mount Vernon City Council Member (360) 826-2094   richardb@mountvernonwa.gov	Dec 2024
<b>CREAT</b>	<b>DANNY HAGEN</b> Skagit County Assessor (425) 275-1947   hagen.danny@outlook.com	Dec 2026
<b>Housing Devel</b>	<b>TINA TATE</b> Hospital District 304 Commissioner (360) 708-2144	Dec 2025
<b>Bd Plan &amp; Engmt</b>	<b>RON WESEN</b> Skagit County Commissioner 1800 Continental Place   Mount Vernon, 98273 (360) 336-9300   ronw@co.skagit.wa.us	Dec 2023
PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBERS		Term Ends
<b>Donor Develop</b>	<b>KATE BENNETT</b> True North Consulting (360) 395-8727   bennetttrk@comcast.net	Dec 2025
<b>TREASURER</b> <b>Donor Develop</b> <b>Executive</b> <b>Finance</b>	<b>GREGG DAVIDSON</b> (360) 708-2292   gregg-davidson@msn.com	Dec 2024
<b>CREAT</b>	<b>CAROLYN MOULTON</b> Lautenbach Recycling (360) 472-0335   cymoulton@gmail.com	Dec 2026
<b>SECRETARY</b> <b>Bd Plan &amp; Engmt</b> <b>Executive</b>	<b>SILVIA REED</b> Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce 301 W Kincaid Street   Mount Vernon, 98273 (360) 305-0895   silvia@mountvernonchamber.com	Dec 2025

**Correspondence:****Skagit County Homeless Housing NOFA and 50% reduction in doc fees****From:** Sarah E. Hinman**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2023 11:46 AM**Subject:** Skagit County Homeless Housing NOFA**Importance:** High

Housing & Homeless Service Providers,

I'm reaching out to provide an update on homeless crisis response system funding. Unfortunately, we are still experiencing a major reduction in document recording fees—our budget last year was \$1.4 million and we are estimating those will be **reduced 50% year-over year**. This revenue reduction began last year, and to avoid any mid-year cuts our Board of Commissioners approved \$600,000 of American Rescue Plan funding to patch the budget. That is not an option for this current funding cycle.

We have also been cooperatively planning with leadership from each of our cities and they are aware of the anticipated funding challenges. A leadership team made up of the Mayors and one County Commissioner helped shape the priorities for the current NOFA, and we are exploring options with each city on the possibility of any collaborative funding approaches. Those discussions will continue over the next several weeks. Even with a contribution of city resources, we wanted you to know that we are still expecting a reduction in revenue and increase in funding requests.

Please let me know if you have any questions—and thanks for all of the work you and your staff do to meet people's needs in the community.

Sarah Hinman

she/her

Assistant Director

Skagit County Public Health

## Volunteers take part in annual homeless count

By Brandon Stone, @Brandon\_SVH, Jan 26, 2023

A team of 78 blanketed Skagit County on Thursday, looking to count the homeless and help them with some basic needs.

The annual Point in Time Count of the homeless is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Though results won't be available until later this year, the count will be used to allocate federal funding for homeless services.

Community Action of Skagit County is contracted to run the Skagit County count.

Steven Simmons, outreach programs manager, said recent counts have tallied about 300 people, but his team is trying new efforts to get a more accurate count.

This year, volunteers with Emmanuel Baptist Church in Mount Vernon invited the homeless to come to the church, be counted and get a hot meal.

Terry Ogdon, the church's director of children's ministry, was one of several members of the congregation preparing chili, bread and drinks for anyone dropping by.

"We're part of the community," she said. "Why wouldn't we want to help the community?"

Other volunteers were stocking up on food and hygiene kits to distribute to those who came by.

Patty Laughlin and Madeleine Anthony, both first-time volunteers for the county Point in Time Count, stopped at the church just after 11 a.m. to grab bowls of chili to take to a group they saw near the Goodwill.

Anthony said one person had clear medical needs, and she offered to take them supplies or help them get an appointment for treatment.

"I think a lot of us aren't far," she said. "One missed paycheck or medical emergency and we can be there too."

Laughlin said shelter exists for those who can pass a background check, but she's concerned for those with felony convictions who usually aren't welcome.

"They weren't sentenced to death," she said. "As a community, we can do better."

## Cold reality: Energy rates rise as temperatures fall

Eric Wilkinson, January 30, 2023

OAK HARBOR, Wash. — For Washington residents on low or fixed incomes, cold winter temps and rising energy costs force some to make hard choices.

John Owen sets his thermostat to 68 degrees -- not a degree more -- because that's what he can afford.

"If I turn it up anymore I'm not gonna be able to afford to pay the bill," he said.

Owen and his wife live on a fixed income of just \$1,000 a month.

When they go to bed they turn the heat off and bundle up with jackets and blankets to save money.

"When it gets cold out, it gets cold in here, and the temperature changes rapidly," Owen said.

Owen said his heat bill nearly doubled this month to \$140. He said he's never seen it so high and has had to make decisions he shouldn't have to.

"I have to make a choice," he said. "I have to decide if I going to eat, or am I going to pay my rent and my utilities."

### **Energy rates up this year**

Puget Sound Energy rates jumped by nearly 9% this year while natural gas costs skyrocketed by around 23%.

An early and exceptionally cold winter is giving people sticker shock when they go to pay their bills.

The war in Ukraine along with less natural gas production and increased demand is driving prices higher.

"If they keep raising the prices, how are we gonna afford this?" John asked. "I don't know where it's gonna end."

### **Utility assistance programs**

This winter is creating a "perfect storm" of sorts for agencies like the [Opportunity Council](#), which helps people struggling with rent and utility bills.

COVID relief money to help people pay their bills is running out with the need for assistance higher than ever.

"We do our best to just get really creative, but it is hard on your heart and it is concerning when you know people are really struggling," said the council's Melissa Frasch-Brown.

[Community Action of Skagit County](#) provides assistance, as well.

For now, John Owen said he is keeping warm with a pot of beans, hoping for an early spring and brighter days ahead.

"We're just grateful for what we have," he said.

Washington state has among the lowest energy prices in America. Hawaii has the highest.



330 Pacific Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
(360) 416-7585  
www.communityactionskagit.org

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

January 26, 2023  
Via Zoom

### In attendance:

Members of the Board:

#### Public Sector:

**Richard Brocksmith**  
**Ron Wesen**  
**Tina Tate**

#### Private Sector:

**Kate Bennett**  
**Carolyn Moulton**  
**Silvia Reed**  
**Gregg Davidson**

#### Client Sector:

**Kati Ortiz**  
**Christina Soltero**

Guests: Thomas Boucher, Chair of CREAT; Danny Hagen (voted in as a Board member during the meeting; see item 6 below)

Staff: Bill Henkel, Tari Caswell, Melissa Self, Sandi York, Michele Metcalf, Phillip Prud'homme, Yvonne Rynearson

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board President Richard Brocksmith called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Introductions. Reminder of our equity-based approach and questions as we work through the agenda.

### **QUORUM PRESENT**

### **II. CONSENT AGENDA**

Minutes from the December 15, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

Correspondence: PSE Energy Newsletter: Community Action Spotlight; Skagit Valley Herald: New Skagit County program set up to better help the homes; Anacortes American: Community Action to open Anacortes office; Board Application: Carolyn Moulton; Board Applications: Danny Hagen

Division Reports

January Finance Report Through November 2022

**Motion to approve the consent agenda including minutes of December 15, 2022 Board meeting and January Finance Report through November 2022 made by Davidson second by Tate, motion passed unanimously.**



### **III. DISCUSSION AGENDA**

#### **6. Board Exec and Planning & Engagement; Brocksmith**

Welcome to new Board member Carolyn Moulten, appointed to the board in December, and welcome to Danny Hagen.

**Motion to appoint Danny Hagen to the 2023 Board of Directors made by Tate second by Bennett, motion passed unanimously.**

Richard noted that the Vice-President position is still vacant and recognized Kari Ranten's past contributions in that role, and requested for current members to reach out if they have interest in filling that role.

#### **7. State of the Agency; Henkel**

Bill noted that he and Richard attended Cora Steinhauer's memorial; noted she will be missed and recognized her many contributions to the Board and the community. Cascade Landing is slated to begin housing tenants in February. PSE awarded a \$100,000 grant for putting solar panels on the roof at the Mt. Vernon offices, we received \$135,000 Family Resource Center funding, and \$50,000 from PACCAR to support the additional development costs for Cascade Landing. It was further noted that County staff let us know that the Document Recording fees have dropped by about 50%. These funds support housing and homelessness prevention, and there are discussions about the State or County potentially using other funds to backfill. This could have an impact on Community Action programs. There has been a significant spotlight on food insecurity in Skagit County, including at the last LAC meeting, when Morgan Curry from Skagit Gleaners shared her research on migrant farmworker food insecurity. Today was the annual homeless Point in Time Count. Bill also noted that Sandi is part of the county's "North Star" advisory group, and said that in future meetings we may want to learn and discuss this effort, as its eventual findings will likely guide future local efforts to address homelessness and behavioral health issues.

#### **8. CREAT; Boucher, Soltero, Jennings**

Thomas spoke briefly on how CREAT ("Community Relationships Education and Advocacy Task Force") originated, as a vehicle to focus and amplify our organization's advocacy on behalf of our community and the people we serve. To do this, CREAT focuses much of its efforts on building relationships with and educates our local, state and even federal elected officials and other community leaders. Liz noted that the Latinx Advisory Committee (LAC) works side by side with CREAT to provide information on needs and advocacy for those with lived experience. Both Kati and Christina noted the importance of being able to serve in this capacity and be at the table, to learn and bring that information back to the community. Thomas and Liz reviewed the recommendation that the Board review and understand the 2017 Public Policy Advocacy Procedures that provides guidelines and structure as to how we, as an Agency, can advocate for legislative priorities for the Agency and our partners. These guidelines give guardrails for staff, while allowing staff to respond quickly as advocacy needs arise – as well as when to reach out to CREAT and the full Board for guidance, and in some cases, such as where there is potential "heat," for approval. Further discussion on two specific statewide priorities for Community Action, as recommended by CREAT and staff. The first is ensuring ongoing State match for Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding. This is flexible funding and essential to provide quick, innovative responses to community need, and has a special focus on serving rural and BIPOC communities. Last year, the state association was able to secure a full state match to the federal level of funding for the first time, which provided significant funding to Community Action (approximately \$250,000), and supported our services to east county, our work helping to host and coordinate the LAC, and WIC

staff outreach and service to the farmworker community. Last year was a special “Proviso” allocation. This year, in creating the State biennium budget, we are working to make this funding permanent. Our second priority is our Community Projects direct legislative capital funding request, which would provide \$300,000 for the purchase and a portion of the pre-development costs for our purchase of the Kulshan View property in Mount Vernon. Liz noted an “Advocacy 101” Training coming in February; attendees will be invited to meet with their own legislators and that additional advocacy options will be presented as the legislature works through session.

**Motion to endorse Community Action of Skagit County’s 2023 state advocacy priorities made by Ortiz second by Bennett, motion passed unanimously.**

**9. Housing Work Group; Brocksmith, Davidson, Metcalf**

Richard provided a brief overview of the potential project located at Kulshan View in Mount Vernon—potentially 55 units, currently envisioned as 2-3 bedrooms, because of its proximity to schools and other multi-family apartments. If we proceed to purchase, we would refine the design and layout, based at least partly on the population we intend to serve there. Noted that we have gone through feasibility study over the past six months including land use, wetlands study, preliminary design and, this week, a pre-application with the city of Mount Vernon, which we believe is the last step in our feasibility process. Based on the input we received from city stuff from this pre-app, and all other review, there appears to be a path forward on a future development of that property. Our consultants, our Housing Work Group, and our Board Finance Committee are recommending that we purchase the property. In addition to all of the feasibility study, thorough review by the Finance Committee indicates that the Agency is in a position to acquire the property. A combination of funding from cash held in different agency accounts would allow for the purchase without tapping into operational funds. We have also already invested about \$20k into ensuring the feasibility of the project. There is potential for additional funding and partnerships moving forward.

**Motion to approve the purchase of the Kulshan View property in Mount Vernon as a site of a future housing development made by Tate second by Davidson, motion passed unanimously.**

Brief discussion about purpose of the MOU between Cascade Landing LLC and Community Action.

**Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Cascade Landing LLC and Community Action of Skagit County made by Davidson second by Bennett, motion passed unanimously.**

Michele provided a brief overview of the Cascade Landing Advisory Committee to help track occupancy, and to navigate tenant issues that may arise at Cascade Landing. Details are still being hammered out but the desire is to have a Board member liaison on the Committee. Tina Tate has volunteered to fill that role!

**Donor Development; Bennett, Prud’homme**

Kate talked briefly about Spirit of Hope on March 30, an event she summarized as “Small plates; big hearts.” The event will focus on sharing our programs and the broad reach of the agency as a whole. At she began, 11 of 25 tables had been sponsored. Carolyn and Kati each offered to sponsor a table, getting us over 50% of tables sponsored! Kate requested Board members reach out to “new” people who might have interest in the agency. Philip noted that the registration portal is open now and special information will be provided to the Board to reach out to their networks. In addition to our table sponsors, we are very close to our event sponsorship goal of \$25k.

**IV. ADJOURN:** Meeting adjourned at 6:34pm.

**BOARD REVIEW & APPROVAL:**

☐

Approved as submitted

☐

Approved with changes noted  
below

x \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Board Secretary

☐

Acting Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## January 2023

### Division Director Report – Melissa Self

#### Care Coordination

**Kathleen Morton, Care Coordination Admin Manager / Jazmin Flores, Care Coordination Manager**

##### Accomplishments:

- Our Housing team has continued to adapt to the changes with Care Coordination and learning the Coordinated Entry process in order to integrate intakes into their schedule once per week to assist with the increasing demand for services.
- Housing Staff have completed their core curriculum to Housing Case Management as well in order to better support with Care Coordination services.
- Seeing more engagement in staff going out into the field and holding home visitations.

##### Challenges:

- Adapting to change in our service delivery model is a huge shift and challenge for our staff as they get to know their new roles. Managers are providing support as best we can right now, in addition to having regular meetings with the rest of Care Coordination team to iron out questions and details that come up.

##### Emerging Issues:

- As we see January come to a close, we face some complications with our new service delivery model when it comes to capacity. We have had 3 Eviction Prevention team members leave our department due to the changes of Care Coordination and another staff member due to performance issues. We have positions open for our direct service team however, we lack sufficient applications to fill these vacancies and meet the demand for services. Currently we have 60 households waiting in our referral queue for services—creating a bottlenecking affect.

#### Street Outreach

**Steven Simmons – Outreach Manager**

##### Achievements:

- Continuing with SRNP roll-out and development- caseloads filling up, posted for new CM.
- Presented SRNP to the County Crisis Negotiation Team, an inter-agency law enforcement group that works with individuals who are experiencing crisis and creating dangerous situations for law enforcement. This went extremely well. They suggested some great edits to the SRNP referral form, which were adopted.

##### Challenges:

- Short-staffed.
- Transition to SRNP has been difficult on team in some ways. They see a drop in sheer numbers of clients served, and have not been working with their CM clients long enough to see some of the benefits of long-term, individualized attention and work.

##### Emerging Issues:

- Catholic Community Services/MVPD motel program set to expire soon, Friendship House hotel vouchers running out, Winter shelters set to close soon, day shelter funding expiring. We will

soon have a ton of clients adjusting to not having anywhere to go. Our hope is to have some folks hired on soon to increase our regular outreach capacity.

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## **Resource Center/Coordinated Entry**

### **Dulce Vasquez, Resource Center Manager**

Skagit County's North Star project has been studying the countywide homeless system and did not include the Coordinated Entry funding in their current NOFA. They have instead, extended our current contract that would have expired on June 30, 2023 to December 31, 2023. We expect to be included in conversations over the next several months to hear the committee's concerns and recommendations. We will apply for the next round of funding when they release the NOFA in fall 2023.

In preparation, we are gathering and preparing information related to the Homeless Coordinated Entry System, including challenges that we, our partners, and clients have identified, and responses we have taken to try to minimize those challenges. **Please see item # 9.**

## Division Report – February 2023

Sandi Phinney, Division Director

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### East County Resource Center

Stephanie Semro, East County Manager

#### What accomplishment are you most proud of?

DSHS mobile truck coming to Concrete and assisting over 40 people in January with basic food or with Health Care signup. This immensely helps with the food insecurity and lack of Health Care in East County. Hamilton outreach numbers are growing as we are consistently there twice a month and offering DSHS assistance, housing intakes, energy referrals, critical need vouchers and bus passes.

#### What challenge are you currently facing?

We continue to see a need for assistance for our elderly in the Upriver Community. They are in need of a vast array of tasks from running errands to just someone to come and visit them for an hour or two. Another challenge is the fact that we are perpetually understaffed in East County and my staff is facing burn out rapidly.

#### What emerging trends, opportunities, or threats are you watching?

Opportunities: Partnering with the library to offer educational programs can bring so many more opportunities to residents in East County and assist people with becoming employed. Emerging trends and threats to our community: The continuing fast rising cost of goods and utilities is making it difficult for almost everyone to make ends meet. We are seeing an increase in need for emergency food, basic food assistance, rental/mortgage assistance and energy assistance. Threats that we are seeing: Continued need for long-term mental health care/rehabilitation facilities. If we don't address the reason why these people are in the situation they are in and get them the proper care, housing them will do little to no good and we will continue to see a multitude of problems.

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### Employment and Education

Marissa Davison, Employment, Education, and Financial Skills Manager

#### What accomplishment are you most proud of?

There has been a lot of collaboration between employment and housing recently which has helped in receiving and serving incoming FCS clients. We have established a new system to track participant activities which have improved compliance with the WorkFirst guidelines.

Note from Sandi: One accomplishment is promoting Marissa to Manager, which will help us build the education and employment programs, but also help smooth out some supervisory challenges on the Adult Education side.

#### What challenge are you currently facing?

Ideally, we would like to add an additional class for participants to have an opportunity to make up missed hours or complete the rest of their required activities, however, we currently do not have the hours or capacity to add an additional class.



Note from Sandi: One challenge in Education are staffing difficulties due to health issues and communication consistency.

**What emerging trends, opportunities, or threats are you watching?**

The switch to care coordination will potentially bring an influx of employment client which is a great opportunity to expand our program.

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**Energy and Utility Assistance**

Misty Velazquez, Energy and Utility Assistance Manager

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

The amount of clients still calling to schedule appointments, we are currently scheduling in April. No shows are not happening as much as in past, which is showing us the need is still really high in our Community.

**What challenge are you currently facing?**

Not really facing any challenges at the moment.

**What emerging trends, opportunities, or threats are you watching?**

Lots of Outreach opportunities are presenting themselves, but they are after business hours. This makes it very difficult to staff these opportunities due to staff family situations and schedules.

## Board Report 2/15/23

Yvonne Ryneerson, Division Director

### Skagit Food Distribution Center

*Community Resource Manager: Madeline McGonagall; Community Resource Coordinator: Jessica Espy*

#### Accomplishments:

- Hired Madeline McGonagall as the SFDC manager and she has been onboarding wonderfully
- Working on a comprehensive operations manual and cross training plan for staff
- Completed the walk in cooler project and received an ‘exceptional’ grade on the Food Lifeline Grant compliance. Only need to still purchase the refrigerated box truck
- Scheduling an ‘introductory tour’ for Madeline and Jessica to meet-and-greet all food bank partners in order to improve relationships and inform the SFDC what each partners’ unique challenges, barriers, needs and client services are. The intention is to tailor technical assistance and communication strategies to each entity.
- Working with Morgan Curry of the Gleaners to support their capacity building and expansion – as well as becoming a new TEFAP/EFAP food bank partner with an open service day.
- Developing purchasing plans from 4 funding sources to spend out the remaining ~\$40k for local food purchasing before the end of grant term – including ~6000 units of locally produced meat.
- Creating a donor development plan with Philip to do more targeted outreach to commercial and wholesale food distributors and producers with the hopes to pull more donations like the January gift of \$10,000 cash and \$15,000 in poultry product for local food banks
- Evaluating our (T)EFAP subcontractor roster– renewing current contracts and offering expanded services to partial contract holders (such as the 3 San Juan Island food banks) or very small food banks who are currently operating solo (South Whidbey). Restarting quarterly Food Bank Subcontractor Meetings and supporting the Food Bank Association as a separate entity.

#### Challenges:

- There has been a lot of change at the SFDC in the past year – so learning how to support and engage staff as the SFDC is in a rejuvenation and growth process has been essential
- The Senior CFSP box program has lost volunteers and clients over the pandemic. We have a new flyer and outreach strategy to recruit for both needs
- Food resource availability, diversity and funding is dwindling so we will need to be creative

#### Emerging Issues:

- Emergency Food Resources are not currently being held, and the SFDC facility would not have the capacity to hold a sufficient volume to support the full needs of food bank clients in the event of a natural disaster or other sudden, high volume need. External partnerships will be required to address this substantial need
- Farm and Food Grant Season is upcoming so we will need to accomplish previous outcomes and apply for new, expansion or service funding opportunities.

### Vets Connect

*Veterans Services Coordinator: Carmina Villalobos; Veterans Services Liaison: Vernon Hunter*

#### Accomplishments:

- Philip applied for a \$20,000 Skagit Community Foundations Grant
- Working towards applying for a \$50,000 Bob Woodruff Foundation grant in May
- Have been working with Megan on Empower Data Entry efficacy, that more comprehensively captures services and touchpoints, with a companion exit survey for this work.
- Vets Connect and Cascade Landing developed the VAF Veteran Housing Subsidy Program enrollment procedures and process.
- Enrollment is open for Cascade Landing and the team is primed to serve the clients as needed

#### Challenges:

- The SSVF program decided not to hire a new program manager for the Vets Connect office. Therefore, we are deciding how to use the empty office space

#### Emerging Issues:

- Susan Brisby will officially retire from the Veteran Affairs VASH program in November 2023. However, Kelly Blau (VASH) will continue to partner with Vets Connect.
- Skagit County Advisory Board meeting February 14th, 2023
- February 17th, 2023, Skagit County VAF Program Monitor
- Vet Housing CAT meeting February 7th, 21st, 28th

## **Mount Vernon and Whidbey WIC**

*WIC Manager: Wende Dolstad; Mount Vernon WIC Site Supervisor: Jhaveena Broadnax*

#### Accomplishments:

- We are piloting a new online nutrition education program for State WIC. Congress did pass a continuing budget resolution containing the increased cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables, although programing has not yet added the extra to family benefits. FFY 2022 saw a 10% increase in participants over FFY2021.
- Creating the SOPs necessary to distribute the \$15,000 of infant formula awarded through the SFDC partnership – WSDA Resiliency Grant. Will have this work completed by term end
- Supporting two staff RD students to receive tutoring to pass their exams – which will not only improve their skillsets as assets to the program – but also assist with one retiring RD vacancy

#### Challenges:

- Lack of diapers for our WIC families.
- WIC family liaison on leave for a month.
- Formula availability is becoming more of an issue again.

#### Emerging Issues:

- WIC will soon be adding lead screening to certification appointments.

## **Senior and Disabled Services – In Home Services and Medicaid Transport**

*In Home Services Coordinator: Mariana Brandt; Medicaid Transport Coordinator: Nikki Robinson*

#### Accomplishments:

- Mariana – “I am definitely proud of the fact that we were able to maintain some level of transportation services, and also direct services in general, while implementing safety procedures and protocols throughout this pandemic. We have had zero exposures to COVID between our participants and our volunteers, and we aim to keep it that way, while providing needed services.”
- Theresa, the new intern started this month and she is onboarding wonderfully! She is also applying for a permanent position with CAS as a Care Coordinator.
- Nikki and Mariana have worked together to develop a handful of outreach flyers to recruit clients, interns and volunteers accordingly.
- Mariana led a great Firewood Cutting Work Party to wrap up that program and move the remaining resources off of private land – and onto clients’ homes in need of firewood.

#### Challenges:

- “We were hit with a very large decrease in volunteers due to the pandemic and shifts in staffing, so we are currently working on recovering from that. The biggest ask and the biggest challenge to fill is housekeeping assistance. There is a shortage of caregivers, and many seniors and adults with disabilities reach out for this assistance. Also our program going from 2 staff members to 1 has come with its own challenges.”
- Nikki has been incredibly flexible to schedule off hour trips when requested but she would like to be able to offer more consistent, high paying trips to volunteers.
- The budget continues to be a pressing concern – we are finding creative solutions and pursuing a variety of funding opportunities to support the program’s financial needs.

#### Emerging Issues:

- Definitely keeping an eye out for any changes regarding COVID, and how that might impact our program. We are seeing a bit more interest in volunteering and I believe that is a trend that I will continue to see.

## Housing Projects Director Report

Michele Metcalf

February 2023

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### Cascade Landing – Burlington, WA

Cascade Landing passed the final inspection needed from the City of Burlington Fire Marshal and the Certificate of Occupancy was issued on February 14. There is a small list of items to wrap up at Cascade Landing (primarily exterior work) that is scheduled to be completed before the end of the month.

Property Management activities during the month of February has been focused on screening applicants and working with Community Action programs to line up tenants for occupancy. There are a handful of applicants that meet the rental criteria. The first round of tenants will start occupying units at Cascade Landing beginning the week of February 20.

### Kulshan View – Mount Vernon, WA

January was focused on wrapping up the feasibility analysis on Kulshan View. A pre-application meeting was held on January 24 with City Planning staff and Community Action staff, Board President, and project consultants in attendance. City Planning staff confirmed that the request for rezone from R-3 to R-4 falls in line with the Comprehensive Plan and expressed general support of us moving forward with the project.

Community Action moved forward with the acquisition of the property on February 7.

Next steps for Kulshan View include community and neighborhood planning to identify community need to influence our final design plans for unit sizes, unit mix, and configurations. We have plans to engage with the Mount Vernon school district and explore other partnerships, and identify project funding.

### Housing Work Group

Prior to the February 3 Housing Work Group meeting, Jason Easton who was nominated for HWG Chair, has decided to decline the role and step away from the committee. During the February 3 meeting the group reviewed the amended memo from the City planning office and revised site plan provided by Mel Maertz, M2 Architects. Discussion focus for Kulshan View also included creating a draft project timeline and list of next steps, which involves submitting the rezone application to the City.

The next Housing Work Group meeting with the full committee will be held on February 17. The HWG will meet again on March 3 and 17.





# Project Status Report for Cascade Landing

Report Date: February 7, 2023

## Project Description:

Cascade Landing is located on the 2nd floor portion of the Cascade Professional Center, a 26,988 square foot, two-story (with partial 3<sup>rd</sup> level) building seated on a 1.59-acre lot in Burlington WA. The building was constructed with 20 offices that will be converted to 34 residential units. The 1<sup>st</sup> level will remain commercial office space, with Community Action occupying suites 106, 107 and 110 for the Vets Connect and Energy Assistance Programs.

**Project Start Date:** Sep-21

**Project End Date:** 14-Feb

**Status:** Complete

## Work Complete for Previous Month:

- Re-construction inspection of punch list items
- Final tours for donors and staff
- Completed legal review of the CA/CL MOU

## Work Complete/Scheduled this Month:

- Re-inspection for fire and sprinkler compliance
- Transition project from development to operations
- Execution of MOU and Master Lease for Cascade Landing

## Work Plan for Next Month:

- No schedule work; project complete

## Project Budget:

### CASCADE LANDING CONSTRUCTION BUDGET



TOTAL BUDGET: \$2,373,742  
CA CONTRIBUTION: 600,000  
BAL TO FINISH: Complete

## Project Milestones:

Milestone	Target Date	Status	Completed (%)	Explanation
Execute Master Lease	9/21/2021	Complete	100%	
Pre-construction site inspection	10/13/2021	Complete	100%	
Permits	12/1/2022	Complete	100%	Issued 2/11/22
Demo, construction & install	8/1/2022	Complete	100%	Behind schedule; near complete
Progress inspection 1	1/25/2022	Complete	100%	Approx. 12% complete as of 1/25/22
Progress inspection 2	4/6/2022	Complete	100%	Approx. 30% complete as of 4/6/22
Progress inspection 3	8/22/2022	Complete	100%	Approx. 75% complete as of 8/22/22
Ribbon cutting	9/27/2022	Complete	100%	
Final inspection: CASC	1/4/2023	Complete	100%	
Final inspection: Fire	1/17/2023	Complete	100%	
Final inspection: Building	1/17/2023	Complete	100%	
Certificate of Occupancy	1/18/2023	Complete	100%	Issued 2/14/23
CA Acceptance	1/18/2023	Complete	100%	
Final Execute Master Lease	1/20/2023	In-progress		Operations activity
Turn over to LLC for manage	1/23/2023	Complete	100%	
MOU with CA	1/31/2023	In-progress		Operations activity
Occupancy	2/1/2023	In-progress		Operations activity

## Project Risks/Issues:

Risk / Issue	Mitigation Actions	Assigned To	Due Date
Permit delay	Burlington hired consultant for inspection	n/a	
Loss of (1) unit due to shear wall	Converted studio to 1-bd to make up for loss	n/a	
Product delay: Flooring	Selected new vendor for material and install	n/a	
Contractor delay: Electric	Project manager reaching out to MCE to complete	n/a	
Est. 11-12% over budget	Owner reponsibility	n/a	
Fire inspection found issue on 1st floor	Upgrade/install new strobes and horns	n/a	

# Project Status Report for Kulshan View

Report Date: February 7, 2023

## Project Description:

Community Action proposes to develop a multi-family housing complex utilizing the maximum density, with a unit mix that includes large unit floor plans (2- and 3-bedroom units), with the maximum number of units allowable. The planned development is for the construction of a three-story apartment building on the western portion of the site and associated parking on the eastern side of the parcel.

**Project Start Date:** May-22

**Project End Date:** TBD

**Status:** Acquisition

## Work Complete for Previous Month:

- Pre-app meeting scheduled Jan 24
- HWG recommendation to Finance Committee Jan 18
- Conclude feasibility analysis by Jan 25
- HWG recommendation to Board Jan 26

## Work Complete/Scheduled this Month:

- Acquisition of P82422 on Feb 7
- HWG project focus meeting on Feb 3

## Work Plan for Next Month:

- Partner with M2 Architects to submit the rezone application for Kulshan View
- Engage in community and neighborhood planning for Kulshan View

## Project Milestones:

Milestone	Target Date	Status	Completed (%)	Explanation
Purchase and Sale Agreement	5/23/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 6/30/22; Closing 9/30/22
Commitment for Title Insurance	5/27/2022	Complete	100%	First American Title
1st Addendum to PSA	6/1/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 7/29/22; Closing 10/28/22
ATSI Critical Area Report	6/15/2022	Complete	100%	Report received 7/28/22
2nd Addendum to PSA	7/27/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 9/30/22; Closing 11/30/22
RFP Phase 1 Architect	8/26/2022	Complete	100%	M2 Architects under contract 9/23/22
Soil Test Mapping	9/13/2022	Complete	100%	Used for geotechnical investigation
M2 Architects for Phase 1	11/30/2022	Complete	100%	Site plan complete 12/5/22
Geotechnical Investigation	10/3/2022	Complete	100%	Report received 12/1/22
3rd Addendum to PSA	9/28/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 12/9/22; Closing 1/6/23
4th Addendum to PSA	12/2/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 1/2/23; Closing 1/27/23
5th Addendum to PSA	12/15/2022	Complete	100%	Feasibility 2/2/23; Closing 2/9/23
Application for Pre-app meeting	12/20/2022	Complete	100%	Application 12/9/22; Meeting 1/24/23
Pre-application Meeting	1/24/2023	Complete	100%	Completed on 1/24/23
Acquisition	2/9/2023	Complete	100%	Property purchased on 2/7/23

## Project Risks/Issues:

Risk / Issue	Mitigation Actions	Assigned To	Due Date
ATSI identified 90% wetlands	Site reassessed by Soundview Consultants	Soundview	
Soil stabilization and haul off	Soil was tested by MTC on 10/20/22	MTC	
Onsite community garden	Coordination with garden oversight group		

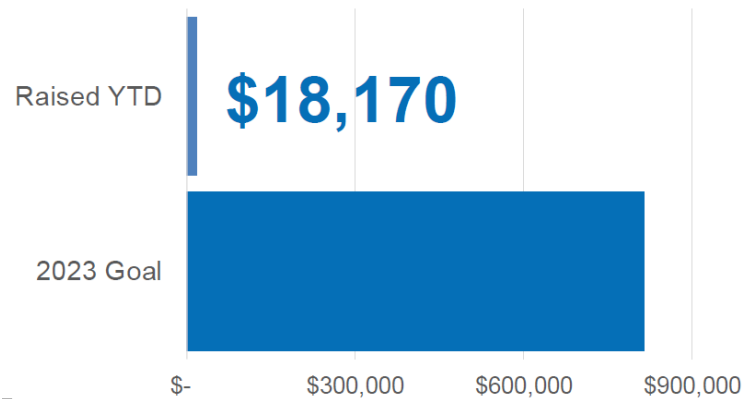
## 2022 Fundraising Progress January 1, 2023 - January 31, 2023

### 2023 Fundraising Goal & Progress

The finance team builds agency budgets and indicates a total shortfall that is needed to raise for the agency to break even.

As of January 31, 2023 we have raised \$18,170 which is about 2% our board approved goal.

**Goal: \$815,000**



### Breakdown of Funds

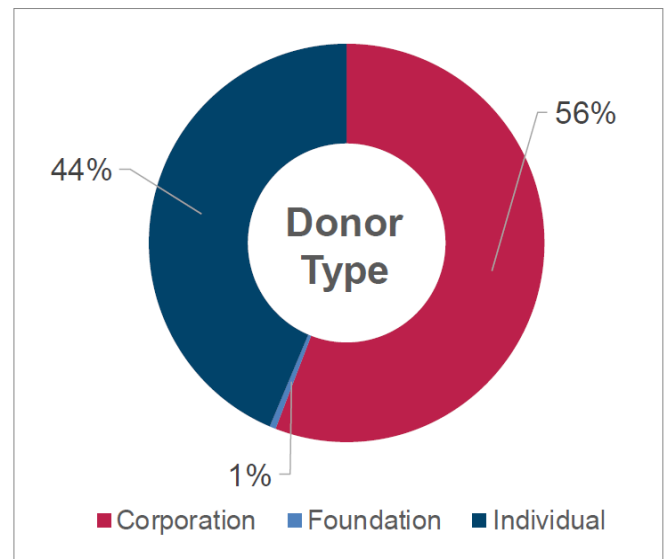
\$10,610	Skagit Food Distribution Center
\$6,836	Greatest Need
\$552	Mountain of Hope
\$95	Veterans Services
\$78	Housing

### Highlights

**Thank you to these donors who made generous donations in January.**

- Carol and Frank Mann donated \$1,000 to greatest need.
- Donald Boston donated \$500 to the Skagit Food Distribution Center.
- Janet and Michael Dillard donated \$500 to greatest need.
- Virginia Darvill donated \$500 to the Mountain of Hope.
- Perdue Farms awarded \$10,000 to the Skagit Food Distribution Center.
- Healthier Vending Northwest donated \$566 to greatest need.
- United Steelworkers Local 12-591 donated \$2,400 to greatest need.

**We welcome our new donors:** Perdue Farms and Patrick and Lee Lucay



**\$18,170**  
Raised 2023  
YTD

**56**  
Number of Gifts  
2023 YTD

**2**  
New Donors  
in Feb

**\$50**  
Median Gift

**Special thanks to our amazing  
Donor Development Committee!**

Kate Bennett  
Ray Horak  
Kaila Roberts

Gregg Davidson  
Darlene Mindrum  
Christina Soltero

Richard Brocksmith  
Maureen Harlan

Richard Warsinske  
Jill Rohrs

## Cascade Landing Fundraising Progress

### Cascade Landing Fundraising

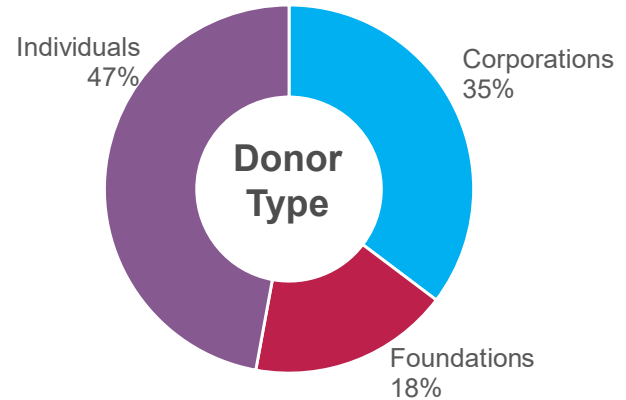
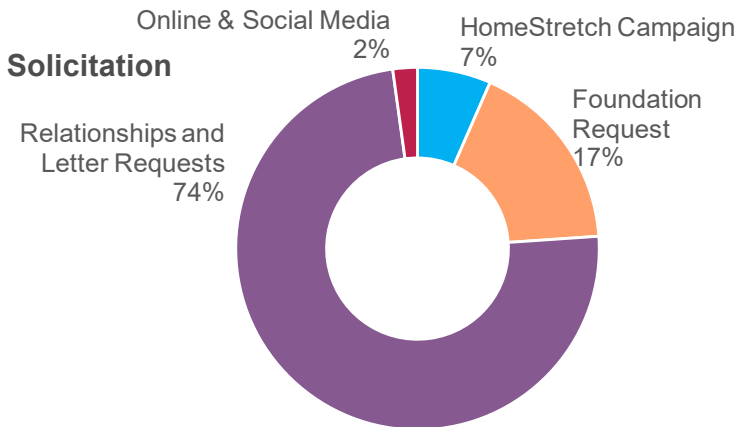
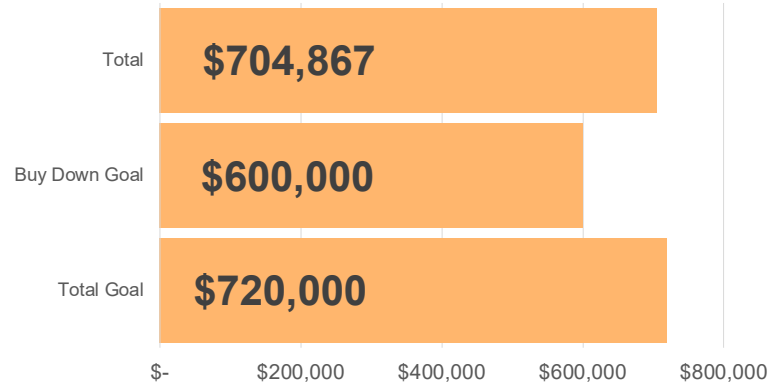
As of February 2022, we have raised **\$704,867** which is **98%** of our total fundraising goal.

#### Cascade Landing Goals

Total amount of Buy Down Allowed: \$600,000  
Furnishings/Finishings: \$120,000

**\*Total Funds Raised (REET included): \$704,867**

REET funding is a Cost Reimbursement Grant secured in 2022.



<b>\$704,867</b> Total Raised	<b>74</b> Number of Financial Gifts	<b>71</b> Donors	<b>\$260</b> Median Gift Amount
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### Highlights

- REET funding is a Cost Reimbursement Grant secured in 2022.
- The Burlington Rotary Foundation and AmeriGroup awarded grants in support of Cascade Landing.
- Working with City of Burlington on Certificate of Occupancy.
- To get on the "interest pool" list go to [www.CascadeLanding.com](http://www.CascadeLanding.com)

### Outstanding Cascade Landing Grant Requests

Funder
Norman Archibald Charitable
Sedro-Woolley Soroptimists
Skagit Mount Vernon Rotary Club
Rotary Club of Sedro-Woolley

February 2023

**Community Engagement Board Report**

Elizabeth Jennings, Director of Community Engagement

**Community Engagement Strategies:***Learn, Volunteer, Advocate, Give, Coordinate, Advance Equity***VOLUNTEER:**

- **Board Action Item:** Help us thank our volunteers! Planning has begun for Skagit Volunteer Month: April 2023! At the February 23 in-person board meeting, we will ask you to sign a big thank-you card for Community Action's volunteers, and for the board to get a group photo holding the card. We'll use this in our public thanks to volunteers. Thank YOU, board members!
- **Board Action Item:** Help us recruit Community Action volunteers! Some of our most vulnerable clients rely on services provided by volunteers. Please spread the word to friends and family about opportunities to make a meaningful difference in peoples' lives:
  - **Help a Senior!** Join our Neat Team! Assist with moving! Adopt a yard! Deliver a food box!
  - **Give Rides, Save Lives!** Medicaid Transportation Drivers
  - **Boost a Family's Funds!** Help households apply for up to \$1,200 in Working Families Tax Credit.
  - **High need: East County, Anacortes and bilingual volunteers**
  - **And many more options found here:**  
[https://www.skagitvolunteercenter.org/need/index?agency\\_id=59658](https://www.skagitvolunteercenter.org/need/index?agency_id=59658)
  - **Contact:** [VolunteerCenter@CommunityActionSkagit.org](mailto:VolunteerCenter@CommunityActionSkagit.org)

**ADVOCATE:**

- **Updated Skagit Legislative Priorities:** See item 6a.
- **Successes:**
  - **State CSBG Funding Request:** Rep. Debra Lekanoff (40th) agreed to carry and successfully submitted our Washington State Community Action Partnership's \$15.4m budget request for state match to federal Community Services Block Grant Funding. We will ask for board members to contact their legislators later in the session with your support.
  - **State Community Projects Funding Request:** Rep. Alex Ramel (40th) agreed to champion our \$300,000 Community Projects request in the state capital budget. Housing Projects Director Michele Metcalf successfully submitted the request, which will help cover acquisition and pre-development costs associated with the Kulshan View property.
  - **State Testimony:** Staff have provided sign-in support and written support on a number of our support agenda issues, including live testimony for the important HB1784 food security bill.
- **Board Action Item:** Brunch & Learn on Community Action's Advocacy, 9 a.m.-10 a.m., Weds. March 1: Learn more about our agency's local, state and federal advocacy strategy and successes, and ways to get involved. Sign up for constituent meetings with state legislators.

**LEARN, COORDINATE, ADVANCE EQUITY:**

- **Feb. 9, 2023 Latinx Advisory Committee Meeting focus: Help Paying the Bills:** Thanks to board member Christina Soltero for helping to design this resource-sharing meeting: Participants shared resources on: **Food, Working Families Tax Credit, Energy Assistance, Free Services through Libraries, and more!**
  - **Board Action Item:** To learn more: Sign up to get LAC notes, meeting reminders, and resources from LAC partners: [LAC@CommunityActionSkagit.org](mailto:LAC@CommunityActionSkagit.org)



## Board Motions

Community Action of Skagit County  
February 23, 2023, Board of Directors Meeting

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### Draft Motions within Consent Agenda

*Note: Any Board member may ask that an item within the consent agenda be pulled for separate discussion prior to a vote.*

#### Motion to Approve February Consent Agenda:

##### 1. Approve Minutes from January 26, 2022 Board meeting

Background on Consent Agenda Motion: Please see attached draft minutes from the January 26 Board meeting (Item 2).

##### 2. Approve February 2023 Finance Report (through month of December 2022)

Background on Consent Agenda Motion: The Finance Report will be shared and reviewed electronically this month, covering through the month of December 2022.

**Potential Motion:** Approve Consent Agenda (items 1 and 2).

### Discussion Agenda Motions

#### 1. Appoint Board Vice President

Background on Discussion Agenda Motion: As former Board Vice President (and chair of Board Planning & Engagement) stepped down from the Board at the beginning of this year. We hope to have a candidate to present for a full Board vote at today's meeting

**Potential Motion:** Appoint Board Vice President

#### 2. Add Backfilling Document Recording fees to Community Action of Skagit County's 2023 state advocacy priorities

Background on Discussion Agenda Motion: Revenue from Document Recording Fees, a major source of both local government and state support for homeless prevention, has dropped approximately 50% across the state, as well as in Skagit County. This downturn in revenue is due to a sharp downturn in the

*housing market and housing sales/refinancing. This translates to approximate \$160 million less in statewide funding for homeless prevention (while Skagit County's funding will drop from \$1.5 million/year to approximately \$750k). Not only will this be a direct and substantial impact on many of our services to address homelessness, it may also have a multiplier impact of reducing other local sources of housing and homeless prevention funding, such as the new 1590 funds in each city, if those local funds are used to backfill this traditional funding source for homeless prevention. Staff is thus recommending that the Board consider adding this to our other two current state-level advocacy priorities (supporting our \$300k Local Community Projects request for Kulshan View, and the statewide \$15m request for CSBG funding, focused on addressing poverty in rural and BIPOC communities).*

**Potential Motion:** Endorse adding to Community Action's 2023 state legislative priorities  
Backfilling of Document Recording Fees

# Community Action DASHBOARD

February  
2023

The finance numbers will be shared electronically prior to the Board meeting.

## Coordinated Entry

### HOT TOPIC

**New enterprises and Revenue.** The County has signaled a 50% drop in document recording fee funding (from about \$1.5 million down to \$750k locally for Skagit), which would significantly decrease services and support for our agency's and our partners' homeless prevention efforts. We are closely tracking efforts in Olympia to potentially backfill some or all of this approx.. \$160m funding drop combined local and through statewide housing and homeless grants.

### Recent Progress on Strategic Plan

Better Lives: Procedures for the new service delivery model of Care Coordination are in place, and staff are working out the kinks and learning. More FCS Employment referrals are coming in.

Stronger Communities: We have hosted events with partners on food insecurity, the WFTC, and legislative priorities. Have begun to have conversations with other local partners around a community needs assessment, and have started the planning for 2023 implementation and reporting.

High Impact Organization: Making efforts to find a DEI consultant to help us develop our DEI strategy.

### Service Highlight

On MLK day, our Senior and Disabled Volunteer services organization a group of AmeriCorps volunteers to load and deliver 4 truckloads of firewood - 3 to the Concrete area, and one in Clear Lake. There are two rows of firewood left.



**How can I help this month?** Sponsor and/or help fill a table with Community Action fans and supporters at the March 30 Spirit of Hope; sign up for a state legislative constituent meeting in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup> or 40<sup>th</sup> (currently being scheduled between March 9 and 22).

**Trends in Needs and Services** Coordinated Entry is a state- and federally-mandated system of assessing and serving people experiencing homelessness across an array of partners, and following common ways to prioritize services by a measure of "vulnerability." In Skagit County, we are currently the designated Coordinated Point of Entry, though our community takes a "no wrong door" approach across all partners. This ranking is based on a comprehensive intake and assessment.

Though there are several challenges to Coordinated Entry in a community that currently has relatively few tools to house and support people who have severe behavioral health issues, Community Action has already instituted a number of efforts to increase access for experiencing a crisis of homelessness. This includes expanding hours, conducting intakes on the street and in cold weather shelters through our Outreach program, rotating in Care Specialists to support our Coordinated Entry team. See item 7 for a full list.

### Community Conversations and Partnerships

- North Star will be analyzing the local homeless Coordinated Entry System before releasing an RFP this fall. See expanded write up included in this packet. Item 7.
- Rep Deb Lekanof (D-40) has agreed to be the House Sponsor for our state CSBG request; Rep Alex Ramel (D-40) is sponsoring our \$300,000 Local Community Projects request for Kulshan View

## 2023 Legislative Agenda

Contact: Bill Henkel, [BillH@CommunityActionSkagit.org](mailto:BillH@CommunityActionSkagit.org)

Updated: Feb. 8, 2023




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### **SUMMARY: Community Action supports policies that advance:**

- **Housing** people in Skagit County can afford.
  - **Food**, nutrition and food distribution and food bank capacity-building.
  - **Basic needs**, and resources for families facing poverty.
  - **Equity** for BIPOC and rural communities.
- 

### **PRIORITY AGENDA:**

#### **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) State Match:**

- Washington State Community Action Partnership is asking for a \$15,450,000 match to federal CSBG funding (Community Services Block Grant), which provides flexible funding for the state's 30 Community Action Agencies to respond to pressing (and quickly changing) community needs, including, with a focus on BIPOC and rural communities.
- Community Action of Skagit County serves lower-income residents in the 10th, 39th and 40th Legislative District. We received \$250,000 in 2022-2023 CSBG state match proviso funding to achieve these goals:
  - East County Resource Center, a front door to services for rural folks in the 39th District disproportionately hit by poverty; and our Concrete Meal Program, serving 50+ seniors and families daily.
  - Expanding WIC (Women, Infant and Children Services) to Mixtec- and Spanish-speaking farmworker families, ensuring kids get a good start in school and supporting important Skagit agricultural businesses.
  - Building on the nationally-recognized success of the Skagit Latinx Advisory Committee and Latinx COVID Prevention Team, building bridges between people with lived experience and their elected officials and other decision-makers.

#### **Community Projects Application: \$300,000 for affordable housing development in Mount Vernon:**

- Rep. Alex Ramel (40th District) invited us to submit a Community Projects application after we get through our January 24 pre-app meeting with the City of Mount Vernon.
  - The funding would cover the 1.5 acre land purchase (\$200k) for the Kulshan View property in Mount Vernon (near LaVenture Middle School), as well as a portion of our pre-development costs (currently estimated at \$575k, including \$375k in wetland mitigation and soil stabilization).
- 

### **SUPPORT AGENDA FOCUS AREAS:**

- **Housing & Homelessness:** Address the up to 50% decline in funding for homelessness prevention with General Fund dollars. The state's document recording fees are experiencing an almost 50% reduction and the state must take action to fill the gap to prevent a loss of critical homelessness services, especially given the increased need across the state.
- **Food & Nutrition: HB 1984:** Keep local emergency food system infrastructure strong and address the food shortage crisis. Provide support for food distribution centers, food pantries, SNAP produce match programs, and senior nutrition programs.

#### **Community Action of Skagit County supports the Legislative Agendas of our coalition partners:**

- Washington State Community Action Partnership (WSCAP)
- Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA)
- Northwest Harvest and WA Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
- Statewide Poverty Action Network
- The Energy Project

## ***Skagit County Homeless Coordinated Entry System Challenges and Responses***

Skagit County's Coordinated Entry System is currently funded by Skagit County and is housed at Community Action. The Housing and Resource Center serves as the main point of entry for households that are experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness.

Each household that calls, comes into our Housing Resource Center, or is met in the community by one of our staff or staff at one of the participating local homeless providers, is interviewed and assessed using a community based assessment that captures the household's vulnerability which will help the provider determine the order in which people are referred to the different local interventions.

Community Action of Skagit County currently uses WA State's mandated database, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), to refer households to multiple interventions at a time, and all providers that are participating in the Coordinated Entry System are receiving daily reports of clients who are on our Housing Interest Pool and likely eligible for their particular program.

Coordinated Entry providers are required to serve households based on the household's vulnerability score. At this moment we have 303 households currently enrolled in the Housing Interest Pool who are actively being referred to shelters, rapid re-housing rental subsidy programs, permanent supportive housing programs, and other housing programs and local resources.

Community Action of Skagit County currently holds a diverse set of program funds which are required to go through our Coordinated Entry System – from July 2021-June 2022 we referred 1,161 households to housing interventions and enrolled 1094 households to a housing intervention program. During the same time, period King County referred 597 households and enrolled 285 households to a housing intervention program. King County has a much narrower focus and higher threshold for who is eligible to enter their Housing Interest List.

We acknowledge that the current Coordinated Entry system has its challenges, and the following are steps we are taking to address those challenges.

**Challenge:** Access to the Coordinated Entry System

**Response:**

- Trained multiple services providers (Catholic Community Services, MVPD Outreach Services, Lifeline Connections, etc.) as well as our Street Outreach team and our Care Specialists, on completing the CE assessment.
- Care Specialists dedicate time in their schedule to provide back-up to Coordinated Entry in the Mount Vernon office. And are able to conduct intakes in the field.
- Once we are able to increase staffing (hiring in progress) will open 5 days/week.

**Challenge:** Lack of Affordable Housing in Skagit County

**Response:**

- Community Action has stepped into Housing Development with Cascade Landing, and is nearly ready to begin leasing.
- Catholic Community Services is scheduled to open their new Permanent Supportive Housing complex, Martha's Place in April 2023.
- Although our community lacks housing availability, our agency and other providers have managed to house or find alternative housing for our vulnerable clients using our Coordinated Entry System.
- Beginning in January 2023, we started connecting people to a Care Specialist at the time, or shortly after receiving a CE Intake and being placed on the Housing Interest Pool to connect and assist with navigation of local resources.

**Challenge:** Lack of Movement on the Housing Interest Pool

**Response:**

- Immediate connection with a Care Specialist to work with the individual or household to identify and break down barriers to being stably housed – even if they do not rise to the vulnerability score to receive a referral to a housing or shelter intervention, or an intervention is not available.
- Care Coordinators work with the households to connect to physical and behavioral health providers, assist with mainstream benefits such as SNAP or TANF, and connect to resources from Community Action and with local providers. Other communities have had great success with this model of service and have been able to secure housing for households often diverting them from shelters or rental subsidy programs. We look forward to being able to report the same successes as our neighboring communities.

It is also important to note that Coordinated Entry system adheres only to the HUD definition of literally homeless or at-risk of homelessness (must have an eviction notice) and does not recognize families who are living in a doubled-up situation, the farmworker population, or those who are being pro-active and know they will be in a housing crisis situation in the near future.

We continue to monitor the program by listening to clients and community partners, and continually assess the data and outcomes to determine ways to improve access and the experience of those dealing with a housing crisis.