

Workforce Housing Grants

Background

Powered by a network of credit unions, the Northwest Credit Union Foundation (NWCUF) is uniquely positioned to harness and deliver resources that strengthen the financial lives of people throughout our region. We do this through asset building, economic empowerment, and cooperative development. In cooperation with the Northwest Credit Union Association (NWCUA), we help more than 185 Idaho, Oregon, and Washington credit unions achieve positive social impact in their communities.

Over the past year, NWCUF has become increasingly engaged in catalyzing our credit union network around the lack of affordability for workforce housing in our communities. Policy makers and credit union leaders consistently have urged NWCUF to use our resources and networks to develop a significant workforce housing initiative. In January of 2018, we hosted our first Affordable Housing Summit, where credit union leaders from across our three states came together. We identified workforce housing as an area where we have considerable opportunity in the housing market, given credit unions' existing infrastructure and capabilities as community-based financial institutions.

Credit unions are uniquely positioned to think creatively and leverage resources to help address this critical issue. Whether it's single-family homes in rural eastern Idaho, or large mixed-income apartments in Seattle, one thing remains abundantly clear: credit unions in our region want to step up and achieve measurable, positive impact for their members and communities. The Northwest Credit Union Foundation will serve as a hub for incubating innovative solutions that have the potential to be scaled or replicated to improve affordability and access to workforce housing options across the region.

Overview

The long-term goal of NWCUF's workforce housing grant opportunity is to increase affordability and access to workforce housing options in our region. Credit unions are already very engaged in the housing market, from providing charitable contributions to low-income housing efforts, to homeownership education and traditional mortgages for market rate homes. NWCUF encourages credit unions to provide financial services across the entire housing continuum but is currently focusing its funding efforts on workforce housing specifically. Nationally, credit unions that are effectively

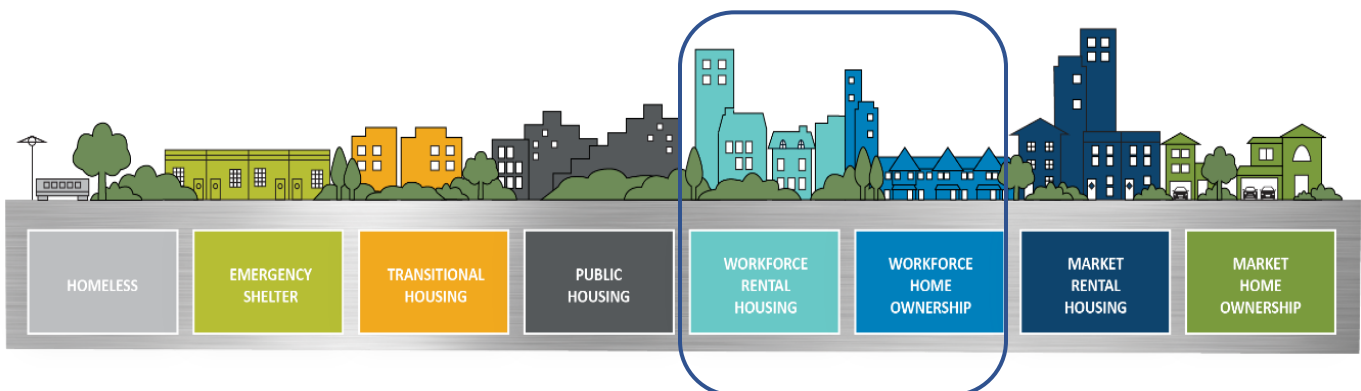
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working in the housing space and implementing housing-based solutions are successful because of the partnerships they have developed to bolster resources, their innovation on existing practices, and risk mitigation.

Being community-based cooperatives, credit unions have close relationships with their membership base and local partners that big banks, traditional mortgage brokers, and the current alternative lending market simply don't have. These connections to the community make the design and delivery of innovative housing solutions not just possible, but an incredible opportunity to showcase credit unions as leaders in addressing affordable housing barriers across the country. We also encourage credit unions to see this grant as an opportunity to increase their membership in underserved markets.

Defining Workforce Housing

NWCUF defines workforce housing as housing that is affordable to workers and close to their jobs; and that is affordable to households earning 60% to 140% of the area median income (AMI). Workforce housing can include homeownership as well as rental housing, ensuring that housing costs are no more than 30% of household income. Workforce housing is often thought of as housing for teachers, police officers, firefighters, etc., but also includes housing for young professionals, workers in the construction trades, retail workers, office workers, service workers, and others. On the housing continuum, workforce housing is adjacent to market-rate rental housing and market-rate homeownership.



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

NWCUF is committed to promoting and supporting efforts that address the inequity that exists in our communities across the Northwest. Through our workforce housing grantmaking, we will prioritize funding for credit unions or credit union partnerships that clearly identify diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) outcomes or strategies in their proposal. Historically, vulnerable populations have been denied access to fair and equal housing opportunities across the country. The current housing crisis we are experiencing today is affecting members across all of our communities, however it is still

disproportionately affecting specific subsets of our region's population. NWCUF believes credit unions have a role in positively impacting the financial health of our underserved communities and vulnerable populations. We encourage you to engage and include these groups in your planning and design process. This will help your credit union better understand what their needs and challenges are so that you may create relevant solutions to the historical, cultural, and institutional barriers underserved populations face.

Engagement with NWCUF and Other Grantees

Every credit union receiving a grant from NWCUF will be expected to participate in routine check-in meetings with NWCUF staff. Additionally, it may be beneficial from time to time for all grantees, and possibly partners, to discuss best practices, barriers, and progress toward project deliverables as a collective group. For this purpose, NWCUF will coordinate in-person, video, and/or phone meetings and grantees will be strongly encouraged to participate. NWCUF recognizes this workforce housing grantee cohort will be serving very different and diverse population segments and will therefore be taking unique approaches to address the needs of their individual communities. However, NWCUF believes there is great value in collectively sharing and discussing these approaches to create new connections and further the impact of the workforce housing initiative across the Northwest. NWCUF may also identify professional development opportunities that will benefit the collective work of all grantees and require participation from credit unions in these trainings.

Reporting

Every credit union or credit union project receiving a planning or project grant from NWCUF has a responsibility to report on the use of grant funds. Upon grant award, NWCUF and the recipient credit union(s) will enter into a grant agreement with mutually agreed upon project deliverables and metrics of success. There will be reporting requirements throughout the grant period that will be submitted to NWCUF for review. Failure to meet project deliverables or to comply with other grant agreement articles could influence future grant decisions by NWCUF.

Resources

In January of 2018, NWCUF convened an Affordable Housing Summit and shared examples of housing success stories for credit unions across North America. These examples were meant to illustrate the depth and breadth of what's possible for credit unions, and presentations from the Summit can be found here:

- [State of Affordable Housing in Our Region](#), Marty Kooistra, Housing Development Consortium
- [Single Family Housing Solutions](#), Larry Garcia, Mountain Star Federal Credit Union

- [Impact Real Estate Program](#), Lilian Chau, Vancity Credit Union
- [Affordable Rental Housing and Multiunit Housing Solutions](#), Mark Kretzschmar, North Carolina State Employees Credit Union

Below are some additional resources to support you in creating your plans.

- DEI Resources
 - The Greenlining Institute, [DEI Framework](#)
 - Nonprofit Leaders Alliance, [DEI Resource Library](#)
- Federal Resources
 - [National Fair Housing Alliance](#)
 - [CDFI Fund](#)
 - [Inclusiv](#)
 - [NCUA 2019 Grant Initiatives](#)
 - [USDA](#): Rural Development Initiatives
 - [Low-Income Housing Tax Credits](#) (LIHTC)

Questions

NWCUF is committed to ensuring that every interested NWCUA member credit union has the support they need to join us in addressing workforce housing challenges in our Northwest communities. We are here as a resource for your credit union as you explore this opportunity, so please do not hesitate to reach out. If you have questions, need additional information or resources, we encourage you to contact NWCUF Program Director, Claire Hendrix at chendrix@nwcua.org or (208) 515-4476.

Request for Proposals

Please review the grant application details below:

- [Planning Grant: Request for Proposals](#)
- [Project Grant: Request for Proposals](#)