



Office of Administrative Services

207 Fourth Ave. North
Kelso, WA 98626
TEL (360) 577-3065
FAX (360) 423-9987

www.co.cowlitz.wa.us

Board of County Commissioners
Arne Mortensen District 1
Dennis P. Weber District 2
Joe Gardner District 3

Office of Financial Management
Claire J. Hauge, Director

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MGT
Claire J. Hauge
Director

Katrina Harris
Budget Analyst

RISK MANAGEMENT
Clyde Carpenter
Risk Manager

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PRESS RELEASE

Cowlitz County was awarded two federal grants from Washington Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program totaling \$411,117

For the second year in a row, Cowlitz County was one of 23 rural communities who were awarded by the Washington State Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant for General Purpose as part of the \$10 million awards on September 12, 2017. Their press release stated “These grants will help strengthen rural communities by helping address a diverse range of essential needs, from priority infrastructure to affordable housing and economic development” said Commerce Director Brian Bonlender. “Commerce works with local government leaders to target strategic investments that will support immediate needs and vision for the future of their communities”. (Washington State Department of Commerce) “Cowlitz County was the only county to be awarded two grants for two consecutive years! Commerce said they were very excited to see our grant applications for housing rehabilitation projects to maintain affordable housing stock, as they know it is a dire emergent need in our area”. Katrina Harris, Budget Analyst.

The first federal grant award is a copy of last year’s grant award. *This year’s grant award is for pass-through funds to Lower Columbia Community Action in the amount of \$222,410; to rehabilitate another ‘up to 12 housing units’ in non-entitlement areas in Cowlitz County (2016: LCCAP Housing Rehab up to 12 houses; \$217,590).* This will be distributed through a local assistance program for low- and moderate-income owned units. “CAP is excited about the opportunity to work on preservation of affordable housing stock. This will be a win-win situation with the housing rehabilitation, followed by Weatherization with the added benefit of energy savings”. Ilona Kerby, Executive Director.

The second federal grant award is similar to last year’s rehab project. *This year’s project is for pass-through funds to Housing Opportunities of SW Washington to rehabilitate the Phoenix House in the amount of \$188,707 (2016: HOSWW Beechwood 8-unit Duplexes rehab, Woodland; \$79,584).* This is a 20-unit facility, which provides low-income housing, specifically for homeless parents with children who are successfully exiting drug or alcohol treatment. “Housing Opportunities of SW Washington is excited about this award of grant funding and we look forward to working with Cowlitz County to improve homes of families we serve at the Phoenix House. Affordable, quality housing is a basic building block for families looking for a chance to succeed in school and life. This award and the resulting improvements will help us create an environment that supports that effort and ultimate success”. Christina Pegg, CEO.

Cowlitz County Chair, Joe Gardner stated, “I am pleased to hear the news of our recent CDBG grant awards. We have such a shortage of quality, affordable low-income housing here in Cowlitz County. Being awarded back-to-back grant funding for two different types of housing rehab projects is definitely a good start in repairing the quality housing we need.”