



# Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://pchomeless.org/> - [info@pchomeless.org](mailto:info@pchomeless.org)

June 4, 2021

Mr. Nathan Lichti, Managing Director  
Housing Finance Unit  
Department of Commerce  
PO Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Dear Mr. Lichti,

The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness is deeply appreciative of your work and welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Program. Our Coalition is a Pierce County wide network of providers, advocates, nonprofits, governments, concerned citizens, people with lived experience all of whom are committed to one single thing: ending homelessness.

We advocated for this money during the 2021 Legislative Session. We formally voted to make 1000 units of housing for people experiencing homelessness our top priority for use of American Rescue Plan Act funding and the Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Program aligns perfectly with our action.

Ensuring shelter and housing for people experiencing homelessness requires: units, funding, providers. All require political will.

We have available hotel units. Many of these units are below \$100K-\$150K/unit.

We have providers who already successfully use hotels for non-congregate shelter programs. As far as we know, all of the hotel rooms currently used are leased. We want sustainable non-congregate shelters and quickly available permanent and permanent supportive housing units. We have been encouraging providers to prepare to purchase hotels. We have also been working with providers who might want to lease a floor for a targeted population.

We have new political will in Pierce County. The Pierce County Council, along with the City of Tacoma Council, formally committed to ending street homelessness by November 1, 2021.

The Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Program can provide some of the funding we need. However, we need the money to be able to be used as quickly as possible within the context of Pierce County. While our acquisition costs are lower, our available local matching funds are also significantly less than in adjacent King County.

Therefore we ask that Commerce:

1. Reduce the match requirements for areas outside of King County and that there be no match for units at \$150K or less.
2. Confirm that ARPA and other federal funds may be used as eligible match.
3. Allow matching funds to be used either for operating or capital purposes including rehabilitation but not require local match on both operating and capital.

Our congregate shelters had to reduce their capacity because of COVID-19. We don't actually know how many people are unsheltered. Pierce County tells us at least 1350. We all believe there are many more: perhaps as many as 6000 people. Daily we see more encampments.

About a week ago, another person experiencing homelessness died of an apparent treatable medical condition in an unsanctioned encampment.

We're relying on Commerce to help us be able to make good use of the Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Program.

Sincerely,

Maureen Howard  
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