

BELLINGHAM & WHATCOM COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITIES

ANNUAL REPORT

20
24



A message from the Executive Director



Dear Community Members,

Since joining the Bellingham & Whatcom County Housing Authorities (BWCHA) in June 2024, I've been energized by the opportunities ahead and by a community committed to making meaningful investments to address our housing crisis.

The challenges before us are clear. Homelessness remains at unacceptable levels, and affordable housing is still out of reach for many of our lowest-income neighbors. Affordability – and the stark mismatch between wages and housing costs – is a top issue across Whatcom County. Lower income households are feeling the crunch the most: 54% of households earning less than 50% of the area median income – equivalent to \$49,000 per year – pay more than half of their income on housing costs each month.¹

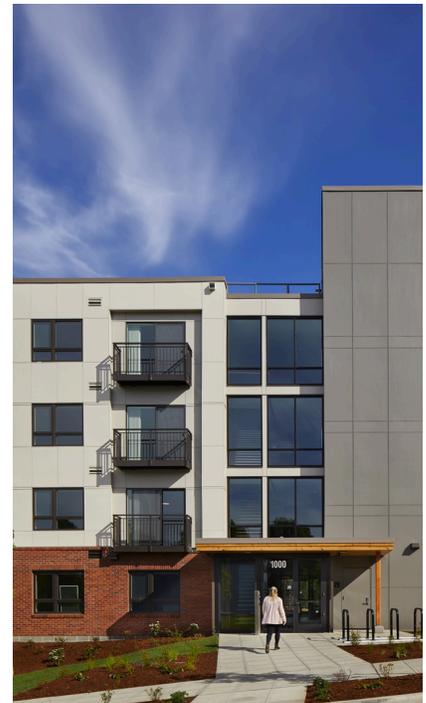
BWCHA has been doing vital work to advance housing affordability throughout our community. In 2024, we supported close to 7,000 people through our housing programs — older adults, people with disabilities, children, and working individuals striving to make ends meet.

We care deeply about affordability for all members of our community, and we know that collaboration is essential to achieving meaningful progress. Building on our consistent legacy of involvement in the community, BWCHA will be leaning into partnerships to improve outcomes and create new housing opportunities for our neighbors.

I invite you to read our full report and reflect on where we are headed.

In partnership,

Andrew Calkins
Executive Director / CEO



1) Department of Housing & Urban Development. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>.

Photographs on pages 1, 2, and 3 courtesy of Ben Benschneider.

2024 highlights

6,730

people served through BWCHA's housing programs

22

new voucher resources brought into the community

\$24.6
million

invested in the community through housing choice voucher rental assistance

54

new landlord partners welcomed to the Housing Choice Voucher program



With high standards for our program administration, BWCHA continues to be recognized as a high performing agency by HUD.

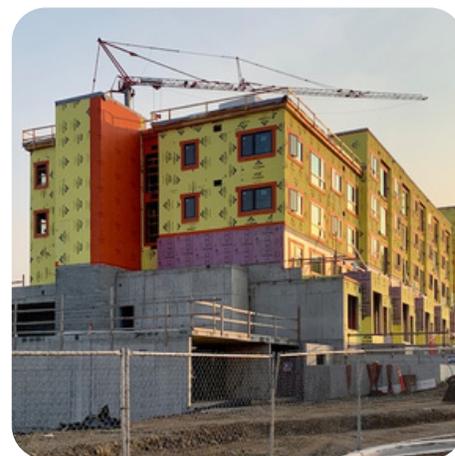
Expanding the supply of affordable homes

BWCHA has a long history of leveraging external resources to build new, high quality affordable housing. In the coming years, we will be working to further expand our portfolio of 1,758 affordable homes through new construction, redevelopment, and acquisition.

Grand Opening of Samish Commons

On June 14, BWCHA officially celebrated the grand opening of Samish Commons. The three phase, 171-unit development pushed our organization forward. In addition to providing affordable housing for seniors, people with disabilities, and working families - the property houses our new offices.

Located in the heart of the Samish Way Urban Village, residents of this mixed-income, multigenerational community benefit from an ideal location offering access to downtown, nearby grocery stores, and outdoor recreation.



Upcoming Major Development Activities



Unity Street Redevelopment

- 📍 Downtown Bellingham
- 🏠 63 units of housing for low-income households
- ✂️ Designing and pursuing funding | Construction in 2026

Sumas Square Rehabilitation

- 📍 Sumas
- 🏠 11 units of housing for low-income seniors
- ✂️ Funding secured and beginning design | Construction in 2026

King Mountain Development

- 📍 North Bellingham
- 🏠 Up to 110 units of mixed-income affordable housing
- ✂️ Land secured in 2025 | Construction planned for 2030

Creating new housing opportunities

Pairing housing subsidies or affordable homes with support services is one of BWCHA's core strategies to advance housing opportunities for people facing barriers to housing stability.

Project-Basing Vouchers with Non-Profits

In 2024, BWCHA initiated or committed 24 project-based subsidies to non-profit partners – rental assistance valued at \$6 million over a 15-year contract period. These vouchers will ensure true affordability for households living at Opportunity Council and YWCA sites.

In total, BWCHA has committed 84 project-based vouchers at partner non-profit sites around the region

Additional Rental Assistance Resources

In 2024, BWCHA also worked to obtain new vouchers that can be administered in collaboration with partners:

- BWCHA sought and was awarded 10 HUD-VASH vouchers for veterans exiting homelessness – administered in coordination with the local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs. This brings our total HUD-VASH allocation to 75.
- Awarded 12 Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers for youth aging out of the foster care system – administered in coordination with the Department of Children, Youth & Families.



Partnering to promote housing stability for families

For years, BWCHA has leveraged partnerships with community organizations to level up our impact. In 2024, we continued site-based partnerships with local service providers – Lydia Place, Opportunity Council, and Holly Community Services.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Lydia Place Supportive Housing Partnership

BWCHA partners with Lydia Place at eight of our Low-Income Housing Tax Credit communities, providing **79 project-based vouchers and support services to families exiting homelessness.**

Lydia Place delivers case management services focused on independent living skills, family advocacy, access to services for children, and assistance with meeting housing program requirements. This decades-long partnership ensures families have the flexible support they need to succeed.

Lydia
PLACE

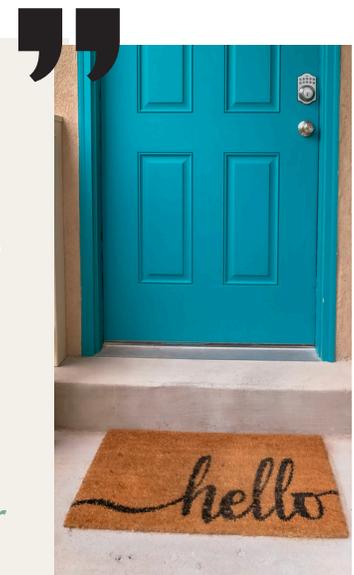
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“For over 2 decades, Lydia Place's partnership with Bellingham Housing Authority has supported hundreds of families exiting homelessness. **Having dedicated units set aside, which is a rare gift, allows us to take the stress off of the housing search and move straight from crisis into stabilization.** Families have the space to heal quicker, rebuild faster, and embrace hope for their family's future.”

- Ashley Thomasson, Lydia Place Executive Director



Investing in our team

And a Safer Workplace

At BWCHA, safety isn't just a priority — it's part of our culture. And the numbers speak for themselves. Thanks to a series of intentional efforts, we're proud that our 2025 L&I Experience Factor has dropped to 0.827, the lowest in nearly a decade. (A factor above 1.0 indicates higher-than-average risk (and higher premiums), while a factor below 1.0 means lower-than-average risk and reduced insurance costs).

Over the past four years, we've seen a consistent decline in our risk exposure, reflecting the careful work of our maintenance team members and our ongoing commitment to workplace safety and injury prevention.



BWCHA employee Jimmy Willand works on a sewer lift pump

How We Got Here

This improvement didn't happen by chance. It's the result of:

- A dedicated safety committee that meets on a monthly basis
- Ongoing safety training and refreshers for team members
- Thorough accident investigations and follow-ups
- A robust return to work program
- Proactive hazard mitigation by way of internal audits and inspections
- A workplace culture where everyone takes responsibility for safety

BWCHA is committed to **maintaining an injury-free workplace** — a value shared by our frontline maintenance staff, facilities management, and leadership alike.

Financials

BELLINGHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (UNAUDITED)

	PRIMARY GOVERNMENT	COMPONENT UNITS
ASSETS		
Current Assets	\$19,331,962	\$5,496,102
Non-Current Assets	\$140,831,810	\$147,622,738
Deferred Outflows of Resources	\$1,211,226	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$161,374,998	\$153,118,840
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities	\$3,627,635	\$1,521,299
Non-Current Liabilities	\$55,563,476	\$133,622,985
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$59,191,111	\$115,144,284
Deferred inflows of resources	\$2,325,775	--
NET POSITION		
Net investment in capital assets	\$21,264,285	\$40,143,397
Restricted	\$2,460,732	\$6,229,738
Unrestricted	\$76,133,094	(\$8,398,579)
TOTAL NET POSITION	\$99,858,111	\$37,974,556

Note: Whatcom County Housing Authority is a separate legal entity. Financial statements are available upon request.

BWCHA manages over \$315 million in assets across both housing authorities and component unit tax credit partnerships.

**Our vision is that every person
in Bellingham & Whatcom
County has the opportunity to
live in a safe, secure,
affordable home.**



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Whatcom County
Housing Authorities**