



## **2007 CEH LEGISLATIVE SESSION OUTCOMES**

CEH was part of a highly successful collaborative effort among major housing and human service organizations including United Way of King County, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, the Washington Coalition for the Homeless, and CEHKC. Successes include:

1. **Increasing the Housing Trust Fund.** Our ultimate goal is to triple the Trust Fund to \$363 million, but we recognize that achieving such a level may require a multi-year effort. In 2007, the Trust Fund was funded at \$130 million; a substantial increase over the prior level and almost double where it had been for many years.
2. **Increasing Funding to Local Ten Year Plans.** We requested increasing funding through a document recording fee to local ten year plans. We are very pleased that the Legislature ultimately adopted an \$8 per document recording fee with 90% going to the counties, which will generate between \$3 million and \$4 million for King County each year.
3. **Addressing Discharge from Foster Care and the Criminal Justice System.**
  - a. **Foster Care.** This was a year in which the needs of youth, and particularly those in foster care, were well recognized. HB 1201 extended Medicaid eligibility to age 21 for youth aging out of foster care; HB 1922 created for the first time a system of housing vouchers for permanent housing for youth aging out of foster care, with funding at \$1 million.
  - b. **Criminal Justice System.** A bipartisan group created a very good re-entry program, which included housing, for people exiting the criminal justice system. After much negotiation between legislative parties, it emerged in the final days of session as SB 6157 with a comprehensive re-entry plan including housing funding at \$4 million for housing up to 12 months. This new program is a very promising change in policy, as housing for people exiting the criminal justice system used to be capped at 90 days, which was rarely enough time to find employment and permanent housing.
4. **Increasing Mental Health Funding and Creating Mental Health Funding for GAU Clients.** The legislature funded non-Medicaid mental; health funding at only the \$6.1 million level, far below our requested level of funding. This means that King County will have turn away people who fall off the Medicaid rolls – estimated at 2,000 last year. They will also have to substantially cut funding to entities providing services to non-Medicaid eligible persons – affecting immigrants, homeless populations, and people coming out of jails and hospitals. The only bright spot in this picture is that there was some new funding for children’s mental health and the Legislature also created a mental health benefit for persons on General Assistance Unemployable (“GAU”) which would serve approximately 1,500 persons per year in King County.
5. **Increase Funding for the THOR Program.** The THOR program provides services and housing for families with children. Our legislative agenda included increasing the funding to that program and broadening the eligibility to include single adults and youth. Unfortunately we were not successful on this effort but will examine returning to this issue next session.