

## 2025 Community Impact Grants Common Application

### PART A: COVER PAGE

*Please fill out this form completely. Note that individual funding agencies have specific grant requirements and will require supplemental materials. Please check the agency website below for details.*

#### **To which source are you applying?**

- City of Bellingham's Housing or Human/Social Services NOFA: <https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities-2/partnerships-funding>
- United Way of Whatcom County's Community Impact Fund: <https://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org/help-for-organizations/>
- Whatcom County Health and Community Services:  
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/Bids.aspx>

#### **Agency Contact Information:**

Agency Name: Mercy Housing NW

DBA (if applicable): Mercy Housing Inc.

EIN: 91-1546525 UEID (from SAM.gov): EL9REMJSJ9K5

Mailing address: 6930 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South, Seattle, WA 98118 USA

Website: <https://www.mercyhousing.org/northwest/>

General phone: (206) 838-5700

State of Washington Business License Number(s): 601 375 663

#### **Executive Director (or authorized representative):**

Name: Joe Thompson

Title (if not ED): President

Email: [Joseph.Thompson@mercyhousing.org](mailto:Joseph.Thompson@mercyhousing.org)

Phone: 206.602.3480

#### **Application Contact (If different):**

Name: Elysa Hovard

Title: Regional Director of Philanthropy

Email: Elysa.Hovard@mercyhousing.org

Phone: 206-832-5561

**Program Information:**

Program Name: Mercy Housing Northwest General Operating Support

Program Address: 528 Sterling Dr, Bellingham, WA 98226

Are all program services delivered at this address?  Yes  No

**Funding Request:** The award amount is dependent on the funding organization. Please see individual funder's supplemental materials for more information about the funds available.

How much funding per year are you requesting for this program?

\$ 30,000

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$ 409,316

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$ 7,395,977

**PART B: AGENCY INFORMATION**

*Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 1-5.*

- **Agency Mission.** Please paste or copy your agency's mission statement below.

To create stable, vibrant, and healthy communities by developing, financing, and operating affordable, program-enriched housing for families, seniors, and people with special needs who lack the economic resources to access quality, safe housing opportunities.

- **Agency Beneficiaries.** Briefly describe the intent of your agency's programs and who primarily benefits from them. Please describe your organization's impact, specifying the number of beneficiaries or clients served per year and their demographics.

Mercy Housing Northwest owns and operates 52 properties throughout Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, providing over 5,000 families and seniors an affordable place to call home. We believe a person's lack of financial resources should not determine their ability to access high quality and safe affordable housing. Beyond housing, we provide onsite resident services that focus on five key program areas – housing stability, health and wellness, community engagement, education, and financial well-being. Providing these critical programs right where residents live ensures that home is a platform for kids to thrive in school, for families

to improve their financial stability, and for residents to have greater knowledge and access to improve their health and wellness. When combined with the stability, security, and pride of having a place to call home, these services help Mercy Housing Northwest residents work toward self-sufficiency and break the cycle of poverty. Our Resident Services program supports residents at our 4 Whatcom County properties: Sterling Senior Apartments, Eleanor Apartments, Trailview Apartments, and Millwork Apartments. Sterling & Eleanor serve seniors, and Trailview & Millworks primarily serve families, with some set-asides for seniors.

The Senior Support Services Program at Sterling Senior Apartments and Eleanor Apartments works to increase economic security and decrease vulnerability for low-income seniors. The program collaborates with numerous community organizations to help facilitate client access to basic needs, financial stability resources, and health and wellness, while enabling seniors to live independently and avoid premature placement in more costly care Facilities. Twenty-five seniors live at Trailview, and 15 live at Millworks, in addition to another 103 seniors living at our Eleanor and Sterling properties. In total, we serve 143 seniors in Bellingham.

The Family Support Services Program at Trailview Apartments and Millworks Apartments work to increase the economic security of families with young children and single-parent households. At Trailview, there are 31 family households, 18 of which are single-parent families. Collectively, 54 children live at the property, of whom 23 are younger than 8 years old. At Millworks, there are 47 family households, 30 of which are single-parent families. Collectively, 90 children live at the property, 52 of whom are younger than 8 years old. In total, at these sites we serve 48 single parent households and 77 children under age 8.

- **Qualifications and expertise.** Briefly summarize your agency's qualifications and expertise (e.g., years of operation, accreditations, experience of staff members, and number of volunteers). Please mention any recent major organizational changes.

Mercy Housing Northwest (MHNW) was established in 1991 through the collaboration of five local communities of Catholic women religious determined to address the housing crisis in Washington State. Since then, MHNW has successfully developed over 2,700 affordable homes across the state, and now provides a safe place to call home for more than 5,500 low-income individuals each year.

On average, Mercy Housing residents—who earn incomes averaging just over \$20,000 per year—pay \$500 less than market rate for a 2-bedroom apartment. These savings can be directly channeled into healthier food choices, medical costs or improved education. It is also a powerful incentive for families to remain renters in good standing while their kids are in school. And they do! Children and families in Mercy Housing communities don't just have a roof overhead. They live in a home that can be the foundation for transformation.

At Mercy Housing, children have access to after-school and summer programs that help them close the gap with their peers and succeed in school. Parents can take GED and ESL courses, take part in financial education programs and access job training assistance. Regular health screenings help keep residents of all ages healthy. All of these programs are offered for free and are completely voluntary. Offering enrichment programs right at home and building relationships of trust with on-site staff increases the chances that residents will take advantage of these opportunities to build their personal and family assets.

MHNW is committed to revitalizing neighborhoods through the development of quality affordable rental housing. MHNW continuously evaluates local community needs and investigates opportunities for new construction and/or rehabilitation of existing housing. MHNW's property development staff maintains close working relationships with community groups, government agencies, legislators, banks, real estate professionals, and other nonprofit developers to identify opportunities for affordable housing development.

Supportive resident programs are central to the successful operation of MHNW properties. On-site Resident Service Coordinators build relationships with residents to ensure that programs and activities match family needs. Our resident programs are unique in that they are supported by Mercy Housing's comprehensive Resident Services Program Model, which defines priority programs, identifies best practices and includes measurement tools to track resident outcomes. Because of our intentional and sophisticated approach to housing-based services, Mercy Housing has become a recognized leader in the field.

When combined with the stability, security and pride of having a place to call home, these services help Mercy Housing residents work toward self-sufficiency and break the cycle of poverty.

- **Racial Equity and Social Justice.** What steps has your organization taken to address issues of racial equity and social justice within your agency? Which steps are complete, and which are planned or ongoing?

Mercy Housing identifies achieving racial equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI) as a cross-cutting strategic priority. Mercy Housing Inc. has a national group of employees from all five regions who work to address institutional practices of racism within and around the organization - The Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Collaborative. There are six key areas in the REDI Organization framework: Resident Empowerment, Policy, Planning & Practice, Communication/Advocacy, Education/Training, People/Culture, and Hiring, Recruitment & Promotion. In 2023, the Policy workgroup rolled out a Racial Equity Lens tool to identify racial inequities or barriers to equity stemming from certain policies, practices, or operations.

Locally, MHNW attempts to infuse the values of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI) into all areas of our work:

Using Racial Equity best practices, including: (1) having translation and/or interpretation available if we lack staff with language capacity; (2) hiring staff who are bilingual and/or bicultural and/or who have lived experience of homelessness or housing instability; (3) encouraging resident feedback and making space of residents to voice opinions and work to change programming, systems, and policy; (4) creating an organizational mandate to integrate racial equity work in all facets of the organization; and (5) ensuring a percentage of line staff, leadership, and board members represent the demographics of the communities we serve.

MHNW is working to infuse equity into all policies and procedures, helping to break down as many barriers that historically have disproportionately impacted communities of color, while also ensuring programs are culturally- and linguistically-affirming to meet residents' needs. MHNW will also, together with its parent organization Mercy Housing, Inc., continue to examine its internal and external operations and reaffirm its commitment to cultural empathy in hiring and in provision of housing and services.

MHNW has offered many REDI trainings recently for Management staff, including: Micro-Aggressions; History of Redlining and Housing Discrimination; Bringing Your Whole Self to Work; Building Trust at Work; Creating Inclusive Spaces; and individual teams conduct their own REDI trainings internally.

Mercy Housing Inc. piloted a Racial Equity Lens Assessment tool of all Mercy Housing regions to use. This is a transformative quality improvement tool used to improve planning decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. This tool is intended to be a starting place to routinely examine daily decisions with a racial equity lens and provides a process to assess how an action or decision might impact the groups of people most likely to suffer preventable adverse consequences.

Providing services with a Housing First approach in which staff trained in trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and case management, help link residents to essential services and referrals that are directly shaped by resident and community feedback. Future, all Resident Services staff are trained in cultural empathy, many are bilingual/bicultural to connect with residents' preferred language or cultural traditions, and many have lived experience of homelessness or housing stability, allowing residents to maintain and celebrate their cultural roots, and be seen and heard in safe community spaces.

- **Agency Funding.** List your organization's most significant funding sources from greatest to least (including the United Way, Whatcom County Health and

Community Services and City of Bellingham); dollar amounts are not necessary. Significant funding sources can be defined as sources that make up more than 15% of your program budget. If you have many funding sources, you may list them by category (i.e., federal, state, foundations, individual donors). Please mention any anticipated or recent changes in your future funding or financial position.

Clackamas County  
City of Seattle  
CommonSpirit Health  
Amazon Housing Equity Fund  
Whatcom County Health Dept  
King County  
PWH  
Brettler Family Foundation  
Whatcom County Health – Children’s Housing  
Strategy Whitehorse Foundation  
City of Tacoma  
City of Bellingham

## PART C: PROGRAM INFORMATION

*Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 6-8.*

- **Program Summary.** Briefly summarize the program and its core activities in one or two sentences.

Mercy Housing Northwest is a nonprofit provider of affordable housing in Washington State, with over 50 properties statewide and four properties in Whatcom County. In addition to developing new affordable housing, MHNW also manages its properties and provides on-site supportive services to residents. Our Residents Services promote stability and connection for low-income families through community events, food pantries, resource referrals, and educational programming, promoting health, independence, and social connection.

- **Program Purpose.** Identify the community need(s) that the program addresses. What are the measurable outcomes that will result from the services provided?

Washington families continue to be burdened by the high cost of housing. According to U.S. Census data, 48% of Washington renter households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, and 24% spend more than half. For low-income families, this lack of affordable housing contributes to far reaching negative impacts--from health concerns and poor academic performance in children to being forced to live in substandard housing.

Many individuals and families served by MHNW have experienced homelessness, domestic violence, or other significant life challenges. MHNW promotes long-term stability for residents by creating quality, affordable, service-enriched housing. By keeping rents affordable, our residents are able to focus their limited resources on other basic necessities.

Our Resident Services program is based on a Housing Plus Services model to enhance the wellness and housing stability of low-income families. MHNW will focus on the program's impact on increasing economic security and meeting basic needs.

- MHNW has defined the following target outcomes for the Senior Support Services Program:
- 90% of low-income households remain housed for 12 months or more, and 90% will pay rent on time.
- Low-income households have access to basic needs resources: at least 80% of households will achieve this.
- Coordination and integration of service delivery is improved through new community partnerships: the program will develop at least one new community partnership each quarter.

- **Program Status.** How long has this program been in operation in Whatcom County? Since your last application, have you made any changes in how you offer services? If this is a new program, how far along is your agency in the planning process? What resources has your organization already invested?

Mercy Housing Northwest has been active in Whatcom County for over a decade. We have recently expanded our services in Whatcom County to include Family Services at two new properties in Bellingham, Trailview and Millworks. We have also expanded our Senior Services to these two sites as well and continue to provide them at Sterling Senior Apartments and Eleanor Apartments. Our Family Services programs and Senior Services programs have been operational in 2024 and are well underway to continue in 2025. We have 4 current Resident Services staff supporting these sites, with two additional positions open. Our organization has invested around \$132,000 annually into resident services at these sites through our rental revenue.



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### UNITED WAY FOCUS AREAS

1. To support financial stability in Whatcom County, we have identified three funding priorities below, basic needs, economic mobility, and breaking the cycle of poverty. Choose **one** category below that best aligns with your agency/program:

#### Basic Needs

- Food security
- Stable, attainable, affordable housing
- Health and mental health care access

#### Economic Mobility

- Financial literacy and training
- Vocational readiness training and support
- Adult education programs

#### Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- Affordable child care and early learning programs
- Academic programs to increase student attendance and achievement
- Parenting support
- Addiction treatment and recovery
- Abuse prevention

2. Please describe how your program/agency services align with the category you selected above.

Mercy Housing Northwest's (MHNW) mission is to create stable, vibrant, and healthy communities by developing, financing, and operating affordable, program-enriched housing for families, seniors, and individuals with special needs who lack the economic resources to access quality housing. Our work is centered on providing stable, attainable, affordable housing as a foundation for residents to thrive.

MHNW has developed over 2,700 affordable homes across Washington, offering housing to more than 5,500 low-income individuals each year. Residents earn an average household income of just \$20,000 annually and pay rents well below market rate. This affordability enables families to stabilize their finances, avoid displacement, and focus on long-term goals like education, health, and employment.

However, housing alone is not enough. We pair affordable housing with on-site resident services to promote housing stability and long-term success. Our Resident Services Coordinators work directly with



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families to provide lease education, rental assistance referrals, and housing support plans. We also help residents build financial stability through financial literacy workshops, employment support, and benefit enrollment assistance. Our resident services include:

- Housing Stability Assistance – Helping residents maintain their homes through lease education, rental assistance, and crisis intervention.
- Youth Development – After-school programs, tutoring, and college/career planning for children and teens.
- Financial Stability – Financial literacy workshops, budgeting assistance, and benefits enrollment.
- Health and Wellness – Food pantries, health screenings, mental health support, and wellness programs.
- Community Building – Social events and leadership opportunities that foster a sense of belonging and empowerment.

This holistic approach ensures residents can maintain stable housing, reduce the risk of eviction, and build pathways toward self-sufficiency. By providing safe, affordable homes alongside targeted support services, MHNW ensures that families not only secure housing but have the tools to remain stably housed and thrive in their communities.

Our work aligns directly with the goal of stable, attainable, affordable housing — ensuring that individuals and families have not only a home but the resources to achieve long-term housing security.

### 3. Please provide two or three key outcomes that indicate progress toward your mission.

List the number of clients being served, what you track, and the most recent results.

We evaluate the effectiveness of our services through data tracking and resident feedback. We track engagement through weekly services notes and community engagement activities. We conduct a biennial resident survey to measure progress on key metrics of service related to self-reported health and food security. We use all these sources to build annual Property Site Plans with the goal of improving resident health and wellness. We manage site staff according to these plans and tailor activities to each buildings' demographics and resident needs. In 2024, our service metrics included:

**Sterling:** 20 residents served with 561 services in 2024

- 155 visits to on-site food pantry
- 16 Medicare benefit access information
- 36 interactions specific to health
- 12 interactions surrounding nutrition and cooking
- 19 interactions regarding lease education and eviction prevention

**Eleanor:** 64 residents served with 789 services in 2024



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- 231 visits to on-site food pantry
- 18 Medicare benefit access information
- 85 interactions specific to social and emotional health
- 22 interactions regarding lease education and eviction prevention

**Trailview:** 174 residents (including children) served with 2,152 services in 2024

- 298 visits to on-site food pantry
- 32 participants in English language learner classes to improve career prospects
- 26 interactions specific to social and emotional health
- 26 interactions surrounding nutrition and cooking
- 24 interactions regarding lease education and eviction prevention

**Millworks:** 150 residents served with 419 services from July to December 2024 (Property opened mid-2024)

- 215 visits to on-site food pantry
- 7 participants in literacy classes
- 27 interactions specific to social and emotional health
- 7 interactions surrounding nutrition and cooking
- 11 interactions regarding lease education and eviction prevention
- 28 interactions for financial education and budgeting

4. How does United Way's investment help meet the funding needs of the organization or program? Please give specific examples of how United Way funds are/will be utilized.

United Way's investment is vital to sustaining Mercy Housing Northwest's (MHNW) resident services programs. While we generate some revenue through rental income, it is not sufficient to fully cover the costs of our on-site, program-enriched resident services. We rely on a combination of public and private funding sources, including United Way, to fill this gap and ensure that residents receive the support they need to thrive.

Our primary expense is staffing, as our on-site Resident Services Coordinators are the heart of our work. These dedicated staff members build relationships with residents, provide housing stability support, connect families with local resources, and coordinate educational, financial, and health-focused programming.

United Way's support will directly help us fund 6 Resident Services staff serving families and individuals across MHNW properties in Whatcom County. United Way's investment is critical to ensuring these



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services remain available, helping residents achieve long-term housing stability, financial security, and improved well-being.

5. Briefly describe how your agency/program will utilize community partnerships or coordinate with other agencies (UW partner agencies, other community non-profits, government agencies, local companies, schools, etc.) to advance your work/mission.  
MHNW works to coordinate services with our partners as closely as possible. We have developed numerous partnerships over the past decade to support the economic security and meet the basic needs of our residents in Bellingham:
  - Grocery Outlet: In Kind monthly contribution to community dinners
  - PeaceHealth: Periodic Health & Wellness events
  - Opportunity Council: Referrals for our homeless set aside and resources for energy & rent assistance. Outreach for SNAP.
  - Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA): Help our residents plan for the future, and to write and communicate advanced care planning wishes to their doctors and family.
  - Goodwill: Aid residents with conversational English
  - Seamar: Health education classes
  - Sterling Paz garden: Food resource for residents at Sterling Senior. Residents at Sterling Senior are one of the largest recipients of free produce from this garden and it's delivered directly to them.
  - Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center: Provides education on how to respond in conflict.
  - Common threads- food education for youth
  - Whatcom Dream- budgeting and financial education
  - Whatcom County- resident service support for families with children 0-5
  - WSU Extension: Master Gardener program gave guidance for our pea patch startup and donated plants and seeds; SNAP-ED multiple times a year
  - United States Bone and Joint Initiative: yearly programming on Arthritis and Bone care
  
6. United Way focuses on ALICE households in Whatcom County. ALICE refers to households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford the basic cost of living in our community.
  - a. What percentage of your program recipients are below the ALICE threshold based on the survival budget for Whatcom County? **92.56%**
  - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? **52.43%**
  - c. Do you collect client data by zip code? YES



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Visit the [United for ALICE](#) website for the most recent (2024 report) Whatcom County data to determine the survival budget guidelines for ALICE households.

7. Please share an example of a client who was helped by your services.

*\*Note: if you receive a 2025 Community Impact Grant, this story may be shared on your behalf by United Way for the purpose of our community fundraising. Names and details may be altered for privacy.*

In the wake of Kobe Bryant and his daughter's tragic death, dads everywhere shared photos of their daughters. Quickly, #girdad began trending on all the major social media platforms.

Here at Mercy Housing Northwest, we love celebrating parents and guardians. For this story, we asked our Resident Services team to identify a dad with a special story. Our Bellingham teammates told us we had to meet Manuel. After more than an hour together, it became apparent to us he represents the very best of what it means to be a #girdad.

When speaking about his three daughters, Manuel's entire face lights up. "Raising Emily, Diana, and Daphne is so exciting and entertaining. It is my favorite job in the world," said Manuel. "They are the center of my entire world."

But Manuel's story began long before his family found a home at Mercy Housing. Originally from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Manuel arrived in the United States in 2005. Like countless others before him who have made similar journeys, he arrived with his brother, few possessions, and a simple dream. He wanted a better life for his family.

As one can imagine, the journey was long and arduous. Filled with twists and turns, Manuel eventually arrived in Bellingham, WA. Immediately, Manuel started working and began taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at Whatcom Community College.

The jobs held since those early days have been diverse. Manuel has operated and repaired machines at a local laundromat. He has driven a forklift at a mushroom farm and worked at a leather factory.

The work can be strenuous and the hours long, but Manuel has never lost focus on why he is working. "Both my wife and I are hard workers. We want to instill a strong work ethic in our daughters, but I wish for them a life that isn't so hard. I am always pushing them to study and take advantage of the educational opportunities before them. In the future, I see them seated in offices being paid for what they know."



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When Emily was born, naturally Manuel was nervous about being a first-time dad. With each addition to the family, those nerves have calmed themselves. “I am always learning something from my daughters. They are so caring and curious,” he said. “I know that curiosity and positive attitudes will carry them far.”

In Manuel’s community, our Resident Services team runs an after-school program focused on enriching activities, homework help, and social activities. Speaking of the community, Manuel said, “I feel lucky to live here. Great resources, great neighbors, and staff focused on the needs of our family.” Together, we are confident Manuel’s daughters will accomplish whatever they want out of this life. We are proud and consider ourselves lucky to walk beside them on this journey.

### **Application Checklist:**

The United Way Addendum and all materials listed below must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday, March 6, 2025.**

Please submit all materials by email to [hello@unitedwaywhatcom.org](mailto:hello@unitedwaywhatcom.org)