

BUILDING CHANGES

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Paving the Way to Employment for Homeless Families in Pierce County

New partnership to provide Housing and Employment Navigator to families in need

SEATTLE, WA, January 28, 2011 – Building Changes and the Washington Families Fund today announced a new partnership with WorkForce Central, Pierce County’s workforce development board, to provide employment services for families who have recently experienced homelessness.

“Getting on a path to employment is critical in preventing families from slipping back into homelessness,” says Executive Director Betsy Lieberman. “With WorkForce Central as a partner, we’re pairing employment services with housing to help stabilize families and improve their economic security.”

Building Changes’ three-year grant to WorkForce Central supports the services of a centralized Housing and Employment Navigator, who will coordinate with Pierce County Housing Authority and their four nonprofit housing providers currently serving families with a Building Changes’ Washington Families Fund grant—Lakewood Area Shelter, YWCA, Exodus Housing, and Catholic Community Services’ Phoenix House. By working closely with these providers and the Department of Social and Health Services, the Housing and Employment Navigator will customize employment services for each family.

The Navigator will work one-on-one with job seekers with career assessment and coordinated access services that meet their specific needs, such as goal setting, job training and employment placement.

“This model provides us with a unique opportunity,” says Linda Nguyen, CEO of WorkForce Central. “By bringing together employment, housing, and support services, we are streamlining the steps families need to take on their way to self-sufficiency. It’s a more efficient system for them. And it’s a great partnership for all of us.”

Funding for the program comes from a grant from Building Changes’ Washington Families Fund, WorkForce Central, and the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation.

“Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation understands there are several paths that address the issue of housing stability and homelessness,” said Karen Veitenhans, Vice President and Executive Director of the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation. “We are proud to partner with Building Changes and the Washington Families Fund to support their innovative, pioneering approach.”

“Private philanthropy plays an increasingly important role in our work,” says Lieberman. “We’re grateful that Weyerhaeuser shares our deep commitment to supporting housing and economic recovery in Pierce County.”

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About Building Changes

Building Changes has supported individuals and families throughout Washington State for more than 20 years, and has led the Washington Families Fund since its creation in 2004. Guided by a belief that everyone deserves the opportunity for a home, a healthy life and a good job, the Seattle-based nonprofit unites public and private partners to create innovative solutions, delivering expert advice, grantmaking and advocacy for lasting change. Building Changes serves more than 8,000 individuals annually, including homeless families with children, homeless single adults, housing and service providers and related government entities. For more information, visit: www.buildingchanges.org.

About the Washington Families Fund

The Washington Families Fund is a public-private partnership created by the Washington State Legislature in 2004 to ensure that homeless families with children have the supportive services linked to housing they need to move from crisis to stability. Contributions by public entities and 24 philanthropic partners now total \$28 million. To date, the Fund has awarded nearly \$18 million to 48 programs across Washington State. Nearly 1,300 families—including 2,248 children and 1,695 adults—have benefited from these programs.

About WorkForce Central

WorkForce Central is the workforce development board for Pierce County. They are the first place to call for access to a comprehensive network of workforce services, including talent recruitment and training. Their unique partnership of government, business, education and community organizations has been providing Pierce County with quality workforce development services since 1982. As a result of their services, Pierce County businesses and workers become more competitive and the community more prosperous. For more information, visit: www.workforce-central.org.

About Weyerhaeuser

Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the world's largest forest products companies, began operations in 1900. They grow and harvest trees, build homes and make a range of forest products essential to everyday lives. Weyerhaeuser manages 22 million acres of timberland worldwide on a sustainable basis in compliance with internationally recognized forestry standards. At the end of 2009, they employed approximately 14,900 employees in 10 countries. They have customers worldwide and generated \$5.5 billion in sales in 2009. Weyerhaeuser stock trades on the New York Stock exchange under the symbol WY. Additional information is available at: www.weyerhaeuser.com.

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