

Support HB 2160: Affordable Housing Opportunities in Pendleton

Safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic human need. The effects of affordable housing on residents are profound and capable of transforming communities. The desperate need for housing became even more apparent after our community suffered a devastating flood on February 6, 2020. The flood damaged over 500 homes in Umatilla County: many within the city of Pendleton.

Our agency, within days of the flood, received resources from Oregon Housing and Community Services to help shelter and re-house flood survivors. An additional \$1.5 million was provided in the Governor's Relief Package for rapid re-housing. Although very generous the availability of rental units in the greater Pendleton area made it impossible to relocate families. The financial aid could have been double or triple but simply put: if there is no housing for families to move into the resource essentially could not be utilized leaving many families with few choices.

One household we worked with was a single, veteran, working mother of two boys. Their home was a total loss and due to the lack of available housing she moved her family into a small recreational vehicle. After months of looking for alternative housing she made the difficult choice to leave the area. Another couple caring for their autistic grandchild was living in an inadequate tent RV and was eventually relocated to an Air B and B. The disruption to the child was concerning.

Still, to this day, survivors are doubled-up, living in RV's and some have left the area. To honor the housing needs of Umatilla County; specifically, the City of Pendleton it is necessary to make land available for the expansion of housing and growth. Pendleton is rich in resources by way of vision and HB 2160 will allow the city to take the necessary steps in identifying reasonable land options for housing development and in turn improve the quality of life of our residents leading to better health and well-being.