

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

General Meeting, Tuesday, May 13, 2025

In person at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Bellevue, and online

The meeting opened with prayer.

Present: 26 in person, 20 online. A list of those who signed in appears at the end of the minutes.

Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands and Peoples: We acknowledge our presence on the lands of the Coastal Salish People by honoring and commemorating their contributions, history, and culture.

Self-Introductions: Attendees provided name and congregation or organization.

Brief Reports:

- *Secretary and Treasurer* (see www.eiscc.net for minutes and financial reports),
- *Congregations for Kids*. Nancy Jacobs shared an anonymous story from an immigrant family that receives school supplies from the program.
- *Eastside Human Services Forum*. Linda Hillesheim reported that the Forum would not ask for membership fees this year while the fee structure is being reconsidered. It would operate with an administrative assistant but no Executive Director. All the member organizations were being affected by the federal budget cuts. As staff are cut, many volunteer opportunities are being generated.
- *Faith Action Network*. Elizabeth Dickinson reported.
 - The rent stabilization bill had passed, although its final provisions were not as strong as originally hoped.
 - The legislature passed a budget with \$9.4 billion in revenue from new sources. At this level, the budget fully funds food programs and the Housing Trust Fund. The Governor is under pressure to veto some of the revenue bills; FAN urges individuals to contact him to ask him not to do that.
 - The proposed federal budget cuts in Medicaid and SNAP would deeply impact people in our communities. 70 percent of the people in Central Washington, for example, are on Medicaid. FAN is collecting stories of how those cuts would impact people in our communities; see the [Medicaid and SNAP](#) action toolkit on fanwa.org.

PROGRAM

SPOTLIGHT: [Anything Helps](#). Presenters: Mike Mathias, Executive Director; Mark Garrett, Board Chairman. [contact mike@anything-helps.org, 505-550-5507]

Anything Helps is on a mission to create and clear paths to stability for people experiencing chronic homelessness. They do this through community action, person-centered innovation, and continuous improvement. Through community engagement, they help foster the conditions for informed advocacy, a reduction in hostility between the housed and unhoused, and make progress towards ending homelessness.

Mark and Mike reported their success at the Bitter Lake encampment in moving people into housing and the next steps in their lives, through intensive, personalized help for the people in the encampment: food, clothing, camping gear, WA state ID, Medicaid applications, cell phones, etc. With regular, physical

presence in the encampment, using volunteers, they helped people apply for housing, referred them to shelters and hospitals, stored belongings, enrolled them in drug treatment, etc. In short, they helped with anything that was needed. And they had success in housing placements. When the sweep came for the encampment, almost no one was there, because the volunteers had found better places for them.

Mark recommended several next-step actions: (1) Other major outreach efforts like theirs at Bitter Lake – taking the people in an encampment, getting them what they need for the next step, and finding a place for them to go; (2) better access to good mental health care and counseling, so that they have the personal conditions they need to stay in housing; (3) communicate and coordinate across church groups; and (4) changing the narrative – addressing the myths, including on social media, about who the homeless are. As they got to know people, they learned how untrue those narratives are.

Mike added that their approach depended on making the entire community the client. That included people and organizations outside the encampment. In their approach, adversaries became advocates. They have put a lot of work into streamlining the process of connecting people with services.

He then talked about their efforts to expand the approach through the Foundational Community Supports Program, which connects a network of specialists such as therapists statewide with people who need their services. The cost of the services is reimbursed through Medicaid reimbursement. The rate is \$60 per service, with a broad definition of service. Interested in providing or using services should contact Mike at mike@anything-helps.org or 505-550-5507.

MAIN PRESENTATION: A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). Presentation by Sophie Glass, Government Affairs, Policy, and Communications Manager. Joined by Lindsay Masters, Executive Director. Slides from the presentation are posted [here](#). Looking at the slides is highly recommended, especially for the graphics with background information and distribution of ARCH projects.

ARCH is a partnership among King County and East King County cities working to preserve and increase housing for low and moderate-income households in the region. The coalition has helped to create over 9,000 affordable homes in communities of opportunity. ARCH supports its members to develop housing policies, strategies and regulations; efficiently administer housing programs; coordinate city investments in affordable housing; and assist people looking for affordable rental and ownership housing.

What is affordable housing? By the widely-accepted definitions, your housing is affordable for you if you are spending not more than 30% of your disposable income on total housing costs. For example, using that definition, 68% of single parents and 66% of senior renters in East King County are “cost-burdened,” that is, spending more than 30% of their income on their housing. This is not surprising, since typical rent in the area increased from \$1,697 in 2015 to \$2,731 in 2024.

The spectrum of affordable housing. The term “affordable housing” refers to units that someone in a particular income range can afford if they pay 30% of their income. The income ranges are calculated as a percentage of “Area Median Income” (AMI), with various kinds of “affordable housing” designed for people with incomes below 30% to as high as 80-120% of AMI. The spectrum of such housing goes from transitional or temporary housing through housing developed with the help of tax credits through home ownership programs.

Who can utilize these various levels? Sophie gave examples of workers who would qualify at the various levels. Minimum wage workers, along with those in retail sales or home healthcare, would probably qualify at the 30-60% of AMI range. Construction workers might be in the 60-80% range, and firefighters and registered nurses would probably be in the 80-120% range.

Does availability match need? Most housing built on the Eastside is priced to serve people with incomes at 80% or more of AMI. Housing that is affordable for people at lower income levels is very scarce, and there is stiff competition to get it. That competition creates upward movement in rents in the private market. 80,000 new units are needed in the region by 2044 to create enough housing that is affordable to people with incomes below 80% of AMI.

What ARCH does. ARCH consolidates resources across Eastside cities to help create housing that is affordable for people with incomes at 50% of AMI or lower. It coordinates public resources, provides technical support, and engages the community. Cumulative ARCH awards total \$120 million across various projects. For example, 35 projects in Bellevue, 24 in Kirkland, and 19 in Redmond contribute to affordable housing. ARCH has funded 6,664 units for families, seniors, homeless, and special needs populations. Those include 2,400 affordable apartments across 96 properties, with 650+ in development. They have also created 800+ affordable homes for first-time buyers created through local policies. ARCH also works with the cities towards local policies that promote affordable housing include subsidies, inclusionary zoning, and preservation of manufactured housing communities.

Faith Owned Land. Washington State law incentivizes affordable housing on faith-owned land. Partnerships with religious organizations can create thousands of affordable homes. ARCH is holding a workshop on the afternoon of June 2 on the power of faith-based land. Register at [this link](#).

Lindsay joined Sophie in the **question and answer period**.

- The first question was about the regulatory framework for ADUs, associated dwelling units, that is extra housing spaces added inside or on the lots of single-family homes. Lindsay noted that there are state mandates for making provisions for such housing. The cities have their own regulations as well, which vary from city to city.
- Another question was about the new cluster of affordable housing buildings in Eastgate. Where do they fit in the housing spectrum Sophie described? One is a shelter, one is permanent supportive housing, and another is “workforce” housing, for renters in the 50-80% of AMI range.
- A participant noted that there were 70,000 or so vacant rental units in King County at any given time offered at market rate. Why not use those? Lindsay explained that there is an oversupply of very small units in the area, studios and one-bedroom units. It is a difficult task to convince landlords to lower the rents on those units to put them in any of the affordable ranges. The participant suggested subsidizing rents to allow those units to be used. Lindsay noted that there is only one direct rent subsidization program, the federal Section 8 vouchers, and it is wildly underfunded, with extremely long waiting lists. Doing subsidies for market rates is hugely expensive. Local governments would not have the resources to establish such programs.
- A final question asked what ARCH was doing to get more housing provided at the lower ends of the housing cost spectrum. Lindsay noted that most of the investments of ARCH funds were for housing at the 50% AMI level or below. Cities were able to provide some incentives that help with

the 80% level, and they are working creatively to help more with the lower levels. Much more is needed.

Announcements

- Urgent and longer-term needs:
 - [Renewal Food Bank](#) expressed an **urgent need** for diapers to distribute. KidVantage (formerly Eastside Baby Corner) is struggling to provide them to those in need.
 - [The Sophia Way](#) is having another Black Haircare Products drive in June. See their website for details on how to make in-kind donations.
 - Tammy Waddell welcomed everyone and their congregations and organizations to participate in [Nourishing Networks](#), a powerful community tool for sharing food and other essentials, “working together to feed each other.”
- Upcoming events:
 - Issaquah Meals Program, every Monday to Friday, 5-6 pm, 180 E Sunset way. Hot meals, no questions asked.
 - Hopelink Farm Fresh Feast, Thursday, May 29th, 2025, @ 5:00pm, <https://fundraise.hopelink.org/event/farm-fresh-feast-2025/e650674>
 - [First Congregational Church in Bellevue](#) will have a Pride Service on Sunday, June 9. “Sing, dance, speak, draw, submit photos, and connect with us to learn more.”
 - ARCH and Imagine Housing, “The Power of Faith-Owned Land for Affordable Housing,” June 2, 3-5 pm, St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, 2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue 98007. Register [here](#).
 - Hopelink Neighborhood Fair-Friday, July 11th, 2025, 11-3pm, <https://www.hopelink.org/events/hopelink-neighborhood-fair/>
- Invitations:
 - Issaquah Meals Program, every Monday to Friday, 5-6 pm, 180 E Sunset Way. Hot meals, no questions asked.
 - Meet Your Muslim Neighbors, Weekly Open House, every Sunday 4-5 pm, Islamic Center of Eastside, 14700 Main Street, Bellevue 98007
- Past events (current or upcoming at the time of the meeting)
 - A week of housing-related events organized by the Housing Development Corporation.
 - A family resource fair was to be held at the Bellevue Library on May 15.
 - Hopelink was hosting “Building Bridges: A Dialogue on Asian and Latin American Contributions,” Thursday, May 15 at Bellevue Community College.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Attendees (list may be partial)

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Basta	Sam	St. Louise Bellevue
Bien	Alaric	City of Redmond Human Services
Bogarin	Fabiola	Hopelink
Bowling	David	Eastside Foundation & EISCC Board
Buckingham	Brooke	City of Redmond Human Services
Burrus	Sue	Eastside Friends Meeting

Cavazos	Madeline	King County/ Balducci office
Christensen	Troy	Porchlight
Collier	Greg	Newport Presbyterian
Cozzens	Susan	Eastside Friends Meeting & EISCC Board
de Michele	Barb	Eastside Human Services Forum
Dickinson	Elizabeth	Faith Action Network
Folkman	Katie	LDS
Garrett	Mark	Anything Helps
Glass	Sophie	ARCH
Hamill	Stevi	First Congregational Bellevue
Hillesheim	Linda	Unity of Bellevue & EISCC Board
Hoggan	Kathy	LDS Bellevue Stake
Holt	Bryan	LDS
Holt	Holly	LDS
Hutchko	Candise	Catholic Community Services
Jacobs	Nancy	Congregations for Kids
Kidd-Miller	Joyce	Baha'is of King County North & EISCC Board
Mabbott	Art	All Saints Episcopal
Marquardson	Warren	LDS & EISCC
Masters	Lindsay	ARCH
Mathias	Mike	Anything Helps
Maupin	Elizabeth	Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Coalition
Noa	Leele	Marysplace
O'Hare	Pauline	First Congregational & EISCC Board
Pendgraf	Patti	The Salvation Army
Perry	Charles	Unity of Bellevue
Phelps	Ellen Weiss	Temple B'nai Torah & EISCC Board
Quijano	Nicolas	City of Bellevue
Reed	Jeff	Highland Covenant Church
Rice	Andy	LDS
Richards	Diane	St. Margaret's
Sheriff	Nikki	MCRC Muslim Community Resource Center
Shirmohamadi	Nasrin	Kirkland
Spohn	Betty	Newport Presbyterian
Tasy	Beverly	Saint Margaret's
Vermouth	Marc	The Sophia Way
Waddell	Tammy	Nourishing Networks
Ware	Michaela	The Sophia Way
Wattley	Janice	Sammamish Issaquah Interfaith