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much more money the Housing Alliance is asking for the EHA. It is waiting for upcoming revenue forecast, showing how much money the state expects to have for general fund expenditures. Those figures are scheduled to be released in late January.

"We can't expect the Legislature to fund it at the level the federal government did," says Ryan Fisher, the co-chair of Community Action Coalition of Oregon, a consortium of community action agencies. "If we can protect the Emergency Housing Account and restore the allotment cuts it weathered, that would go a long way to helping families who need it."

If at least one of Janet Bryd's dreams could come true, Oregon would spend approximately \$20 million dollars in each budget on affordable housing.

Bryd knows she will have to dream on, at least for a little while. But Oregon's increasingly unstable and unpredictable revenue, and the subsequent budgets the Legislature is then able to make, call into question whether there ought to be more sources of dedicated revenue, in addition to the document recording fee, that would be used exclusively for affordable housing.

Dedicated sources of revenue could come from a particular "sin tax," such as on cigarettes, or beer, or even lattes, or by passing a statewide or local levy or bond, which would increase property taxes.

Portland has been considering a local bond or levy to be used exclusively for affordable housing for the past two years.

"It is a hard time to look at bonds or levies," McLennan says. "Polling is not looking good for most topics right now."

That more or less leaves the Legislature to raise taxes as a means of generating revenue. But with the Legislature evenly split along party lines, it is unlikely that any new taxes will be created, especially given that the recession continues.

"I would be at a loss about where we might turn next for a dedicated revenue source," Bryd says. "Anything you can think of has already been tapped in one way or another."

McLennan, Bryd and others think the Legislature will have to raise taxes. They would not say what taxes need to be created, or which ought to be raised. But they see it as the only way to stop programs from being cut so deeply that they will not be able to function. McLennan thinks that

Oregonians would understand the need for more taxes.

"I would hope that (the Legislature) would trust that the community is willing to pay taxes and make investments for things that are important, well run, efficient, and effective," McLennan says. "If they approach this session of the Legislature saying 'no new taxes,' I think that's a mistake. People are willing to pay, they just need to feel confident that it's being well done."

Bryd agrees, and thinks it is absolutely necessary to not only examine the current tax structure and tax exemptions, but to create new ones.

"The state, as it's currently moving forward, doesn't have enough money," Bryd says. "My fear is that the solutions advanced won't address the underlying structural issues, but will come at the expense of people who are already hurting."

The first major round of lobbying housing advocates will make is scheduled for February 14. It is not a coincidence it is on Valentine's Day—the advocates call the one-day lobbying camping "Have a Heart." Housing advocates will gather in a rally at the state Capitol, and then meet individually with as many legislators as possible to discuss the Housing Opportunity Agenda.

Fisher is helping organize the "Have a Heart" event, and expects at least 100 advocates, housing providers, and others involved with affordable housing to be in Salem on February 14.

Affordable housing advocates are optimistic that the majority of their agenda items will pass through the Legislature. Many items are non-partisan, sources say, and others don't require any increase in funding.

"I think the Legislature will be eager to do anything positive that doesn't involve spending money," Bryd says. "It's up to us to make a case."

Many housing providers and advocates fervently believe that a lack of affordable housing for low-income people, and increased destabilizing circumstances, will greatly affect how people are able to meet their other needs — such as finding a job, taking care of their children, and paying their bills.

"If Oregonians don't have a place to call home, then they can't address the other challenges that are coming their way. I think our job is to make sure that we get that message out to legislators," Fisher says.

2011 legislative agenda for the Housing Alliance

• **Maintain Support for Dedicated Revenue for Affordable Housing:** The document recording fee (enacted in 2009) supports development and preservation of rental housing, homeownership, strategies to end and prevent homelessness, and capacity of non-profit partners.

• **Increase the Emergency Housing Account:** This resource has been funded at the same level since it was created, while the need is quickly growing. Paid for by the Emergency Housing Account, the program both helps to keep at-risk families in their homes and homeless families to get off the streets.

• **Preserve Existing Affordable Housing:** Homes with federal rent subsidies are at risk of conversion to market rate, as is some housing built and owned by non-profit partners statewide. Lottery Backed Bonds could fill financing gaps and preserve these affordable homes.

• **Restructure the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit:** The proposal would slightly restructure the tax credit to help ensure that this tool, which helps keep rents low, remains useful even in challenging financial times.

• **Maintain state enabling legislation for local property tax abatement programs to invest in properties:** The Housing Alliance is supporting an option to extend the enabling statute for 15 years to 2027.


• **Continue and expand protections for tenants in foreclosed properties:** Proposed changes will bring greater stability and permanency to protections for tenants, including notice requirements to tenants of a foreclosure sale and of their rights throughout the process, the removal of unnecessary procedural barriers to protection, greater clarity around who is covered and when, and sanctions for violation.

• **Protect Tenant Access to Utilities.** When a tenant's rent includes payment for utilities, and the landlord defaults on payments to the utility company, that tenant bears the burden of a shutoff. The 2011 legislative concept aims to provide protection to tenants by strengthening notice requirements to tenants before shut-off, and creating a structure by which tenants can pay to the utility company the amount required to avoid shut-off and then deduct that amount from rent owed to the landlord.


• **Secure and preserve public subsidy during foreclosure proceedings.** This would allow public agencies and nonprofits to ensure that significant public investment is not lost during foreclosure, while also requiring that they follow the same process as any other foreclosure sale purchaser.

• **Support the Manufactured Housing Landlord Tenant Coalition:** Proposals moving forward in the 2011 legislative session to support resident purchases of manufactured home parks and protect tenants whose park is converted to a subdivision.

• Recognize the problem of hate crimes against people who are homeless and implement specific penalties.

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