

# HOUSING

The  
Portland  
Observer

## Adapt A Home Program Presented Award

Multnomah County's Adapt-A-Home program earned an award of excellence this week at the National Association of County and Community Economic Development Conference.

Multnomah County Department of Community and Family Services staff members Janet Hawkins and Karen Jones Whittle were scheduled to accept the honor at the conference in Salt Lake City on behalf of the local county and community partnership program.

"Adapt-A-Home is at the fore-

front of providing accessible housing for people with disabilities.

The program combines the best elements of the federal Fair Housing Act with the financial backing needed for making houses and apartments accessible," said Lorenzo Poe, Multnomah County Department Director of Community and Family Services.

Adapt-A-Home offers grants up to \$2,000 to be used to make rental and owner-occupied housing units adaptable to persons with disabilities by installing ramps, fitting bath-

rooms with grab bars and widening doorways. The program's intent is to increase the number of accessible housing units to enable disabled persons to live independently in society.

According to Janet Hawkins, contract manager for Adapt-A-Home, last year this provided assistance to 41 housing units in east Multnomah County and Gresham. For more information on Adapt-A-Home, contact Derorah Wright or Brenda Jose at Unlimited Choices, Inc., at (503) 234-6167.

## UO Housing Brimming With Students

University of Oregon residence halls are as popular as ever this fall. Mike Eyster, director of University Housing, says approximately 3,250 students will be residing in campus housing. UO residence halls opened with a record 3,300 students in the fall of 1994.

"We feel very fortunate to be full," said Mike Eyster, director of University Housing. "It means that students like what we have to offer and that we can keep costs down because we operate more efficiently when we're full."

In order to accommodate the students, university housing set up temporary space in several of the its residence halls and rented 62 motel rooms on Franklin Boulevard. Students in temporary housing will be assigned rooms as they become available. There are approximately 100 additional students on a housing

waiting list.

"We use temporary housing because it allows us to accommodate as many students as possible who want to live on-campus," said Eyster. "Every year, the majority of the students are placed in permanent housing within the first couple of weeks and everyone has rooms by the end of fall term."

Two additional resident assistants were hired to work with students placed in the motel spaces. Eyster pointed out that students in temporary housing must follow university housing policies and will receive the same services as those in the residence halls.

"Students choose to live on-campus because it is low-cost and convenient," said Eyster. "With temporary housing, we provide that same sense of community, convenience and cost-effectiveness."

Residence halls also provide other advantages, according to Eyster. He said research indicated that students living in campus housing are more likely to succeed academically and to develop stronger ties to campus life than their counterparts living in other types of housing. University housing has plans to increase this advantage for students during this school year.

"The physical additions of cable and the Internet in some of the halls will be a welcome change for students," said Eyster. "These additions, combined with our renewed effort to integrate the residence halls into the academic environment, should help residents achieve even more success in their studies."

Projected fall 1995 enrollment is 17,000 students. In fall 1994, the University of Oregon enrolled 16,681 students.

## The County Is Seeking Citizen Participation For 1995 Board Of Equalization

Multnomah County will appoint twelve or more members to its Board of Equalization this fall and is looking for citizens who would like to be considered for appointment. We seek representatives to apply from each district, and encourage a good ethnic representation, diversity of age groups and a mixture of men and women.

The Board of Equalization reviews appeals of assessed values on property. Each year, Multnomah County property owners may appeal to the Board of Equalization if they believe the assessed value of their property is too high. The Board considers each appeal and arrives at a decision on the appropriate assessed value.

Serving on the Board of Equalization is a demanding and time-consuming job. Members must attend a

mandatory training session in the late fall and begin meeting to hear petitions to reduce assessed valuation on January 8, 1996. The Board of Equalization panel is made up of three members. Due to the large volume of appeals received, three panels are normally convened. The panels meet Monday through Friday until April 15, 1996. Because of the enormous time commitment, the County offers Board members a per diem of \$84.00 for each full day of work.

**Qualifications for appointment to the Board of Equalization include one or more of the following credentials:**

- Must be a Resident of Multnomah County
- Real Estate Experience (broker, property appraiser, etc.)
- Title Experience
- CPA or Economist

- Educator in the Finance or Business Area
- Banking Experience (loan officer, etc.)
- Attorney with Experience in property Litigation
- Property Management
- Tax preparer
- Homeowner
- Past Board of Equalization member

**Those interested may contact:**

- Delma Farrell, County Chair Beverly Stein's Office: 1120 SW 5th, Room 1515; Portland, Oregon 97204; Tel. (503) 248-3953; FAX (503) 248-3093
- Sherrill Rudolph, Board of Equalization: 2115 SE Morrison, 1st Floor; Portland, Oregon 97214; Tel. (503) 248-5241; FAX (503) 306-5504

**Applications Are Due By 10/5/95.**

## HUD's Role Endangered

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry G. Cisneros has briefed leading civil rights advocates on pending legislation that would remove the Department's authority to investigate instances of illegal housing discrimination.

Cisneros informed the group of the Senate Appropriations Committee's approval of Legislation taking away HUD's historic role as the nation's fair housing enforcer and preventing the Department from attacking "redlining" in the insurance industry. In addition, Cisneros said, the bill removes HUD's oversight authority -- including fair housing oversight -- over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the government-sponsored housing enterprises.

"These actions would turn back the clock on civil rights," Cisneros said. "Effective enforcement of fundamental fair housing rights for all Americans will be critically undermined."

Cisneros told the group, which included representatives of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), and the National Fair Housing Alliance, that the legislation may be considered by the full Senate as soon as Tuesday, September 25.

The provisions have been included as part of the overall spending bill setting HUD's budget for next year. Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri chairs the Senate subcommittee which would remove

HUD's fair housing enforcement authority.

HUD has had the administrative responsibility for enforcing the Fair Housing Act since it was enacted in 1968. Under current law, the Department has the responsibility to receive and investigate complaints claiming violation of the Act, to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the law has been violated, and to seek voluntary settlements for each valid complaint.

Federal law gives HUD the responsibility to protect Americans from housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability and familial status. Under the pending legislation, this enforcement responsibility would be transferred to the Department of Justice.

Cisneros and the civil rights leaders agreed that moving fair housing enforcement to the Justice Department would be a step back. The Justice Department does not have a national field office structure capable of investigating the approximately 10,000 housing complaints HUD receives annually. In fact, the Justice Department lacks the administrative structure to handle the cases HUD routinely settles without litigation.

The Senate bill would also force and immediate cessation of HUD's enforcement of the Fair Housing Act's prohibition on property insurance "redlining" -- the practice of denying insurance of setting unreasonably high standards to provide insurance in certain minority or central city communities.

"Redlining is a serious fair housing problem," Cisneros said. "If homeowners and would-be homeowners in minority neighborhoods are redlined by insurance companies, they are being deprived of opportunities to build and invest in a community."

By enacting the redlining provision, Cisneros said, the Congress would force an immediate halt to all of HUD's enforcement activities, would disrupt countless ongoing legal proceedings and could cause individual complainants to lose their right to counsel.

The responsibilities of the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO) -- the sole government office responsible for regulating Fannie Mae (the Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation) -- would be transferred to the Department of the Treasury.

Cisneros said that under this proposal, the office would lose its authority to work for the benefit of the national housing market and increase the risk associated with the government's implicit guarantee of \$1.3 trillion the government-sponsored housing enterprises' securities.

Secretary Cisneros told the group that he will fight to assure that HUD maintains its critical role in protecting Americans from discrimination, settling disputes before they reach litigation, and working with the housing and insurance industries to achieve voluntary compliance with our nation's fair housing laws.

## Katz Releases Results Of Public Building Security Task Force Review

Mayor Vera Katz released the results of the "Public Building Security Task Force" she convened this April, in the wake of the bombing tragedy at the Oklahoma City federal building.

"I initiated this review to try to prevent Portlanders from ever facing horrors like the ones we saw in the Oklahoma City bombing. I wanted to let them know that we are doing everything we can to ensure our buildings are as safe and secure as reasonably possible," said Katz. "This report -- the result of four months of the Task Force's extensive and detailed investigation -- is the first step in making Portland public buildings safer."

The Task force broke the review into two sections: the first recommends measures to improve the security of public buildings in general, and the second provides a security assessment of the vulnerability of each of the public service buildings.

The first section was released; the second will remain confidential as allowed under public records law ORS 192.501(19) because of their sensitive security nature.

The report said that, "Portland is by no means immune from seemingly random acts of terrorism, such as the Oklahoma City bombing. And like any large city, Portland also faces increasing instances of theft, vandalism, harassment, and assault... The security counter-measures discussed below will assist in the preparation."

"We have a responsibility, not only to our 5,000-or-so employees, but to the public as well, to make it possible for them to come to their jobs or take care of business and both feel and be safe," said Katz.

Katz said she would use the report to determine necessary expenditures in preparing the next two-year city budget. "Some of the recommendations I will work to put into

effect immediately," said Katz, "others we will wait to include in the next budget cycle, and others will be implemented on a more long-term basis."

**Among some of the security enhancement possibilities listed in the report:**

- Grouping agencies with similar security risks and needs in common buildings;
- Removing traffic and parking access from the areas around vulnerable or high-risk buildings, in order to make it more difficult to park and detonate car/truck bombs;
- Erecting barriers -- pop-up, removable, steel, or concrete;
- Installing surveillance cameras -- both active and non-recorded or dummy cameras;
- Limiting delivery areas to a single guarded location;
- Removing landscaping like bushes, hedges and shrubs that could conceal a bomb;
- Restricting access after hours and, for agencies that occupy one floor, restricting public access to a single reception area;
- Adding mylar film to windows, which would prevent injuries from flying shards of shattered glass;
- Placing a highly visible uniformed security presence near entrances and exits and implementing roving patrols;
- Requiring employees to wear photo-identification badges;

• Creating a coordinated security response plan.

Some of the provisions would obviously be more costly than others, however, Katz said some of the provisions, such as the photo-ID badges, could be instituted in both a cost-effective and timely manner.

The Task Force Facilitator, Fire Bureau Division Chief George Houston, said another vital part to enhancing security that they strongly recommended was starting security awareness training for employees.

"People should learn to be aware of others who maybe don't belong in the building after hours, and for suspicious cars and trucks left parked in front of the buildings too long," said Houston. He also recommended that employees be taught emergency procedures for what to do in situations like receiving a bomb threat, personal security.

Gary Sussman of the US Attorney's Office and Portland Police Bureau Lt. Cliff Jensen co-chaired the threat-assessment/security counter-measures group. The team to assess current building vulnerabilities was co-chaired by Ray Kerridge, Bureau of Buildings, and Bill Young from General Services/Facilities.


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