

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

- 1) What is the projected number of attendees for the 2026 and 2027 conferences? Confirming to be around the historical benchmark of ~1,200?**

1,200-1,300.

- 2) Has a venue been identified or tentatively held for the 2026 conference?**

We are contracted with Spokane Convention Center for 2026 and the Tacoma Convention Center for 2027.

- 3) What is the projected number of exhibitors and/or booths for the conference?**

53 exhibitors/booths.

- 4) Can you provide a past exhibitor/sponsorship prospectus or rate card?**

This will be posted to our website.

<https://www.wshfc.org/admin/20260519RFPConferencePlanning.htm>

- 5) What sponsorship revenue targets exist, if any?**

\$120,000.00 for 2026.

- 6) Can you provide the approximate historical revenue generated from exhibitors and sponsors?**

2025 gross sponsorship/expo was \$233,700.00.

- 7) What is the projected total number of speakers (including plenary and breakout)?**

110 speakers.

- 8) Does the conference utilize a formal Call for Presentations (CFP) process? If so, who manages it?**

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

Yes, and is managed by our contractors and conference project manager.

9) What is the typical number of concurrent breakout sessions or tracks?

7 tracks (two for Homelessness) with 49 sessions total.

10) Will the selected contractor be expected to provide strategic input on program development beyond logistics?

Yes. The contractor will be responsible for leading a Steering Committee to plan plenaries and provide guidance and support to Track Teams for session development and programming.

11) Are there any continuing education credits offered? If so, for which professions?

Yes, for the Homelessness track. The people who earn them are service providers such as case managers through the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

12) Can you provide a sample agenda from a recent conference (by day)?

<https://www.housingwa.org/2026-program>

13) Is 3 days the full conference program, including pre- or post-events?

3 days is in-person programming. The Homelessness track will offer virtual programming post-conference.

14) Can you confirm the off-site events, networking receptions, or partner-hosted events?

See the program here: <https://www.housingwa.org/2026-program>

Off-site events/partner hosted events are typically coordinated not to run during conference hours and are not managed by our contractors or project manager.

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

These events can be posted as optional in the conference App (WHOVA) community board.

15) What marketing assets will be provided (e.g., logos, branding guidelines, past photography/video)?

Logos, branding guidelines, conference photos, and an archive of past marketing campaigns.

16) What marketing platforms or CRM/email systems are currently in use?

WHOVA for past and present registered attendees. Uncertain what platform is being used by contractors for email marketing.

17) What social media accounts are actively used for the conference?

Facebook and LinkedIn.

18) Does the Commission maintain a marketing database? If so:

a) Types of audiences included (past attendees, partners, broader industry lists)

Our contractors maintain and manage marketing and data. Audiences include all mentioned above.

19) Can you confirm whether Whova is used solely as the event mobile app, or if it is also being used for attendee registration?

WHOVA is the conference App and registration system.

20) If registration is managed separately from Whova, what registration platform has been used for the conference?

Not applicable.

21) Have you contracted a general service contractor/decorator in the past?

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

Our conference contractor often hires sub-contractors to fulfill many logistical aspects of the conference.

22) Have conference materials been historically printed, provided digitally, or both?

Both.

23) Is there a volunteer program associated with the conference?

a) If so, what is the expected number of volunteers?

No, though Commission staff are involved in some aspects of staffing the conference. All other workers are hired by the contractor.

24) Beyond the Whova app, are there additional event technology tools you are contracted with (e.g., virtual/hybrid platforms, engagement tools)?

Smartsheet for project management. Wix.com for conference website.

25) Are there expectations for session recording or on-demand content delivery?

We typically record and publish sessions and not plenaries.

26) What is the process of speaker selection?

The planning committee is made up of representatives from the Commission, Department of Commerce, and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Members of the committee recommend speakers, and we also solicit submissions.

27) Who is responsible for securing sponsorships?

The planning contractor handles the solicitation of sponsors. An effort is made to retain existing sponsors and solicit new sponsors.

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

28) What is the overall conference budget?

2025 Budget

	Budget
Revenue	\$914,850.00
Expenses	\$819,058.39
Under budget	\$95,791.61

29) What is the total budget for the event – meaning what has been historically spent on:

2025

EXPENSES	2025 BUDGET	2025 ACTUALS
All Areas: Audio/Visual, Lighting, Staging P/D, Photographer		
Includes: Welcome Reception AV, Keynote Session AV w/ tech support, Breakouts AV w/ tech support Exec Rooms AV, Registration / Exhibitor AV, Videographer / Photographer, Pipe/Drape/ Stage / Platforms		
Total AV=	\$108,721.52	\$110,089.65
Decorator / Furnishings / Rentals / General		
Includes: Centerpiece Décor, Panel Chairs/Stools, Printers, BO Demo Counters, Janitoria, Medics, Linens, Waste Baskets		

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

Total Decorator / Furnishings / Rentals=	\$20,000.00	\$8,050.96
Facility and Space Charges		
Includes: Contract Meeting Space Rental, Carpeting, General Electrical, CC Security, Parking, Trash/Dumpster Fees		
Total Facility Rental=	\$0.00	\$1,155.00
Food and Beverage (SC = 21.5% + TX = 9%)		
Includes: Welcome Reception, (2) Continental breakfast, (2) Lunches, (3) snack breaks, Crew Meals		
Total F&B=	\$357,961.37	\$386,313.33
Electrical		
Includes: Electrical Srvc & Labor for power strips for crew office, registration and other spaces		
Total Electrical=	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hotel / Lodging		
Includes: Lodging for WSFHC, ERP/MES Staff, Scholarships, Speakers		
Total Hotel / Lodging=	\$123,590.00	\$41,951.31
Internet		
Includes: WiFi (Attendees), 4 hardwired connections, Splash page (for sponsorship)		
Total Internet=	\$500.00	\$0.00
Registration / Merchant Services		
Includes: Whoova App, Whoova/Stripe Merchant Fees/Reg Fee, Subscription Renewal for HW email and 123 Forms, Lanyards, Badge		

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

Supplies, Reg tables/chairs/signage, Temp Staff, Rope/Stanchions		
Total Registration Costs=	\$55,285.50	\$45,126.73
Sponsor / Exhibitors (Fulfillment)		
Includes: Kiosks or Tables/linen, A/V Monitors, Electrical drops, Pipe/Drape, I&D Labor, TY Banners		
Total Sponsor / Exhibitors =	\$39,600.00	\$46,680.87
Security		
Includes: Venue Security Personnel		
Total Security=	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Signage and Branding		
Includes: Signage Printing/Production, Photo Step/Repeat, Venue Marketing Space Rental		
Total Signage & Branding=	\$27,900.00	\$23,682.66
Speakers		
Includes: (2) Opening Keynote Speaker Fees & Travel Expenses, (2) Lunch Keynote Speaker Fees & Travel Expenses, Multiple Track Speaker Fees & Travel Expenses		
Total Other Vendors =	\$72,500.00	\$41,488.27
Technical Services - Virtual, Recorded and Interpretation		
Includes: Virtual Platform, Simultaneous Interpretation Services, ASL Interpretation Services		
Total Technical Services=	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
Contingency (\$5,000)		
Placeholder		
Total Contingency =	\$5,000.00	\$3,750.00

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

30) How often does the planning team meet during the planning cycle?

Between roughly January and when the program is finalized around April, meetings with the steering committee are bimonthly. Commission staff in charge of the conference are in more frequent contact with the planning contractors and may meet weekly and as needed as the conference approaches.

31) How many people serve on the planning committee (outside of the conference management firm)?

The steering committee includes 10-15 members – mostly Housing Finance Commission staff, plus three each from the Department of Commerce and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Additional subject matter experts may participate on an ad hoc basis.

32) How much money or how many scholarships are in the scholarship program?

Housing Washington awards approximately 40-50 scholarships that cover registration, flights, and hotel costs for those who cannot afford to pay. \$1200 per person.

33) Do you anticipate the 2026 conference to have a similar agenda, receptions, and special events as the 2025 conference?

Yes, the format has been consistent over the years, but we are open to changes to maintain relevancy.

34) Do you anticipate the conference growing in the next 2-3 years?

Yes, we expect there may be growth.

35) A question regarding Section II F – Service Costs of the RFP: What is the maximum dollar amount?

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

The Commission will not dictate the maximum dollar amount but are asking respondents to include that information in their submission.

36) Who is the current contractor?

Engstrom Public Relations

37) Is this RFP issued due to a required mandate and is it for two years only?

Yes to both questions. However, we are encouraging contractors to submit their proposals! Additionally, while the contract is for two years we have the option to extend that for another two years.

38) Will there be multiple contractors and contracts?

No. However, the consultant can engage subcontractors for the project.

39) What portion of the budget does the Commission provide?

- The Commission contributes \$100K to the conference
- The Dept. of Commerce contributes \$35K to the conference
- The Housing Alliance contributes \$50K to the conference

40) What is the expectation of how the consultant will find subcontractors? Does the Commission provide leads, or is this to be done by the consultant?

Generally, the consultant contracts with their own preferred vendors. The Commission can provide leads but is always open to new contractors.

41) How long has our current consultant been working with the Commission?

A: Over 20 years but please do not let this dissuade you from submitting a proposal. The conference has evolved a great deal over the years, and the Commission is always open to new ways of functioning.

42) Conference Length (this directly relates to speaker support and onsite support calculations):

2026 RFP – Housing WA conference

Q&A

- Do you anticipate the length of the conference to remain the same as 2026 for the next two years?
 - If growth is anticipated, then what is the goal for growth for 2027 and 2028?

We do not anticipate a change. If it changes, we will revisit the contract.

43) Speaker Management:

- Do you anticipate the same number of tracks and allotted speakers as 2026?
 - If growth is, then what is the goal for growth for 2027 and 2028?

2027 is set due to restrictions of venue. We have no plans to add tracks in 2028, but this could change.

44) Scholarship Management:

- Do you anticipate the same number of scholarship recipients as 2026?
 - If growth, then what is the goal for growth for 2027 and 2028?

We plan for 50 full ride scholarships, and possibly more registration only scholarships, dependent on strengthening sponsorship efforts in this area.

45) Housing Management:

- **2027:** Do you anticipate the housing needs to be similar for WSHFC Staff as 2026? Meaning, is it anticipated that Tacoma would qualify for hotel accommodations for WSHFC staff (will everyone be automatically approved for hotel or similar to 2025)
- **2028:** Is it anticipated that the conference would follow the same location pattern (meaning likely in Eastern WA)?

We anticipate that in 2027, staff hotel accommodations will be provided to those who live fifty or more miles from the Tacoma Convention Center. In 2028, we plan to be in Eastern Washington.