

INTRODUCTION TO
WASHINGTON STATE LOW-INCOME HOUSING COALITION
'LoHoCo'

For the first time in the history of the State of Washington, Low-Income organizations have initiated the formation of a coalition of poor and non-poor to advocate for improved housing policies and programs for low-income families through the State of Washington.

This private, non-profit corporation called the Washington State Low-Income Housing Coalition (LoHoCo), was established in September 1970 with an initial membership of 220. As of October 30, 1971, membership had grown to 800, with a growth rate now of four members per day. Membership consists predominantly of representatives of low-income organizations from all sections of the state with a good portion of the membership consisting of various non-poor specialists: architects, urban planners, builders and real estate men. Its mandate is as follows:

This coalition will provide the State of Washington with a capacity to identify problem areas, to design and lobby for enlightened legislation and new housing policies, to mobilize and coordinate the necessary support and machinery for bringing about a comprehensive and state-wide housing plan, and finally to seek the necessary public and private funds to implement programs designed to provide decent and sound housing for every citizen in the state of Washington. No one organization or even federal or local government agencies have the capacity to do this on a statewide basis and could not command the necessary resources. This involvement of the non-poor with the poor on a state-wide basis has great potential for changing the housing conditions of the poor throughout the state. Most important is the fact that a coalition of poor and non-poor gives assurances that new legislation, new policies and innovative housing programs will reach those who need them the most. This would also provide untold opportunities for volunteer citizen efforts in various areas of the state to become creatively involved in bringing about enlightened and forward looking housing legislation and stimulate local housing programs that could well make the State of Washington the national leader in the field of housing. Many programs stated in this paragraph are now being realized throughout the state, an shortly LoHoCo's major thrust for this program year will be realized: the Housing Development Corporation which operates state-wide.

The potential and democratic efforts of the coalition have been recognized by state government leaders, including Governor Daniel Evans (R). The Governor has said: "I think the concept is great and it represents the willingness of people to work for better housing and to lobby in an effective way to obtain legislation."

The organization chart enclosed explains the coalition firmly believes in local representation of the state organization. Too often organizations become top-heavy, both in framework, and in policy making. LoHoCo actively seeks local groups participation in the coalition's decision making.

The Policy statement of LoHoCo established goals, and methods of reaching those goals. This policy statement was put together by the members of the Coalition at a general meeting in September, 1971.