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Senior apartments preserved, renovated in rural Colfax

COLFAX, Wash.—Gone will be the '70s countertop colors that match the front doors. Gone will be the aluminum windows that ice over on the inside during the winter.

Here to stay will be 18 fully renovated, affordable, critically needed apartments for low-income seniors.

“Seniors, especially those with low income, have very limited housing options in rural communities like Colfax, so it was very important to us to preserve the Marcus Place apartments and keep them affordable,” said Dale Miller, housing development manager of [Community Action Center](#). The Whitman County nonprofit housing and services agency is renovating the property.



One of the two Marcus Place buildings.

The renovation is partly financed with a \$260,000 loan from the Housing Finance Commission's Capital Plus! program, a partnership with the Washington Community Reinvestment Association.

Marcus Place, originally built in 1978 with a mortgage backed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, includes individual rental assistance for the tenants. When the longtime owner of Marcus Place died in 2009, the estate contacted the Community Action Center about acquiring and rehabilitating the property to preserve it as affordable housing. Community Action Center purchased it in June 2013 with the help of the state Housing Trust Fund; financing for the renovation through WCRA and the Commission followed in December.

“Keeping affordable housing available to rural, low-income seniors is part of our core mission,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission. “We're glad to be a part of funding this project.”

Marcus Place is the only housing in Colfax with rental assistance for seniors with low income. It also offers the vital combination of a convenient location and transportation support—the latter thanks to C.O.A.S.T. Transportation, a program of the [Council on Aging and Human Services](#) in Colfax.

The renovation (by [Quality Contractors LLC](#) of Deary, Idaho) is in full swing. The first two apartments are almost finished, said resident manager Karen Walker.

“They've done beautiful work,” said Walker, who has lived at Marcus Place for 13 years. “We're really happy to see this upgrade.”

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The [Washington Community Reinvestment Association](#) (WCRA) is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit created and supported by more than 38 financial institutions doing business in Washington state. WCRA's lending programs, totaling approximately \$130 million, finance the creation and preservation of low-income and special-needs housing, as well as real-estate-based economic development projects in all parts of Washington.

The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](#) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that brings private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. Over 30 years, the Commission has created and preserved more than 275,000 affordable homes across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.