

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2007

Media Contact:

Caroline Bombar-Kaplan, 425-260-3302



**State Honors Pam Blanton of the King County
Housing and Community Development Program**

SPOKANE, Wash.—Sept. 11, 2007— Pam Blanton of the King County Housing and Community Development Program (a subdivision of the Community Services Division, a division of King County’s Department of Community and Human Services), was honored last night by the State of Washington for years of service to the mission of providing affordable housing for the benefit of Washington residents. In an awards ceremony at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane that was part of the annual Housing Washington conference attended by more than 700 peers and colleagues, Ms. Blanton received a 2007 *Friend of Housing* award from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

“In her 15 years at King County, Ms. Blanton has been a tireless advocate for people with housing needs,” said Deputy Commissioner Will Graham (who also serves as Assistant Director for Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development’s Housing Services unit. “In all of her work, Ms. Blanton has shown a talent for translating complex government regulations into simple programs that work for the people that she helps.”

She has accomplished her work first as King County's Relocation Specialist, and for the past five years, as the King County Developmental Disabilities Division Housing Coordinator. When Pam started this job, people with developmental disabilities or DD were not accessing the new influx of Section 8 vouchers available for people with disabilities through the King County Housing Authority. No one understood how to assist them in accessing vouchers and this population was losing out.

Ms. Blanton took on the challenge. She became an interpreter of Section 8 regulations, and then translated that information for parents and state case managers,

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assisting them to fill out and submit the required paperwork. She then advocated for peoples' needs, tracked the voucher process, and made sure that people did not lose their vouchers. She became an expert in using the tools of reasonable accommodation to provide exceptions to the rules that would allow people with DD to have equal access to housing.

Since 2001, Pam has helped over 450 people with DD receive vouchers and live independently. Her leadership has opened the doors for people with DD to live in a variety of housing situations in the community. Her contribution has given the opportunity for many to experience new living situations. She has helped to provide them a future of independence.

The Commission received a record 49 nominations for the *Friend of Housing* awards from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry. Honorees are selected for their leadership and exceptional contribution to creating or supporting affordable housing, implementing housing-related programs, creating innovative financing mechanisms for housing, supporting homebuyer education or technical training efforts within the housing community and helping to solve housing problems.

Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents.

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