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LHA Launches an Initiative to Increase Affordable Housing for People with Developmental Disabilities through a Statewide Strategic Framework

SACRAMENTO, FEBRUARY 12, 2018: California-based *Lanterman Housing Alliance* (LHA) is proud to announce the launch of an initiative to create a Statewide Strategic Framework to increase affordable, supportive housing for people with developmental disabilities in our state. Three decades of research have found that people with developmental disabilities who move from institutional settings into the community are happier, healthier, have more control over their lives, and are better able to function independently. Moreover, 75% of adults with developmental disabilities in our state are currently living with aging parents who, in coming decades, will no longer be able to care for their adult children. However, market-rate housing conditions in California do not presently meet the demand of this population.



This necessary effort to create a Statewide Strategic Framework to address this issue is funded by California's *State Council on Developmental Disabilities* (SCDD): an agency that ensures people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the supports they need. The framework will be facilitated in partnership between LHA and the *Corporation for Supportive Housing* (CSH): a national nonprofit that advances housing solutions as a platform to serve vulnerable populations and create healthy communities. The goal of this initiative is to create a

roadmap that includes both tested and innovative housing methods to catalyze future affordable housing development and supportive services.



The timing is critical for this initiative. Stagnant wages, surging rents, conversion of long-term rental units into newer short-term models, the state’s elimination of redevelopment agencies, steady reduction of federal public funding for housing, and competition for housing resources from other at-risk communities, have all combined to create an environment of affordable housing scarcity for people with developmental disabilities.

Affordable housing solutions must be created quickly to address this population’s diverse housing needs. During the coming year, LHA will engage community leaders, family advocates, service providers, housing developers, financial institutions, policy-makers, and legislators to participate in the process of addressing these issues. Existing research and data, broad-based surveys, one-on-one interviews, and collaborative meetings will be used to gather public input.

The Framework will 1) include data on existing and projected needs within this population and the current rate of housing development within the state, 2) provide best practices from successful housing initiatives for people with developmental disabilities across the U.S., 3) identify available funding sources for capital, financing, rent subsidies, and supportive services, 4) identify innovative housing development models and ownership strategies, 5) research groundbreaking intervention approaches utilized with other vulnerable communities, 6) improve strategic alignment of California’s developmental services and affordable housing systems, and 7) identify opportunities for continued engagement at the local, state, and federal levels.

Other topics that will receive significant attention are the role of families and regional centers in providing supportive housing choice and the currently limited access to tax credit financing for supportive housing projects that serve adults with developmental disabilities.

Kristin Martin, Chair of LHA and Executive Director of HOPE, Inc., commented on the launching of this initiative, “This is a good day for Californians living with a developmental disability who are searching for affordable, independent living options. We want this Framework to be a guide for what works and what could work if the appropriate changes to public policy are made.”

“People all over the state are working so hard to create this critical affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, they are running into some monumental obstacles. We believe this Framework will help to remove some of those barriers and get the tap flowing on new housing.”

LHA would like to invite the community to join them, either as an observer or a participant. **Email housing@lantermanhousingalliance.org if you would like to remain informed or take part in meetings in your area.** LHA is determined to create systemic change in the housing market and to be a catalyst for addressing the shortage of necessary living options for people with developmental disabilities in California. LHA believes that in partnership with SCDD and CSH this framework will be the first step toward realizing that goal.

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ABOUT LHA:

The Lanterman Housing Alliance is an industry association founded in October 2014. The Alliance's shared purpose is to network and communicate best practices and strategies for providing housing for people with developmental disabilities.

The name "Lanterman" refers to the Lanterman Act—the California legislation that created the Regional Center system. Regional centers are nonprofit private corporations that contract with the Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Member organizations of LHA vary in size, make-up, and programs offered. However, each maintains strong ties to the local Regional Center in their service area. These relationships empower our collective mission to create affordable housing solutions for the population we serve.