

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
REPORT TO WHATCOM COUNTY
CLOSEOUT OF A \$500,000
HOUSING REPAIR AND REHABILITATION PROJECT GRANT**

Information for Public Hearing to be held on 05/04/21

Whatcom County received a \$500,000 grant to be used for housing repairs and rehabilitation in Whatcom County (excluding the city of Bellingham). This program was managed and operated by the Opportunity Council, with services to Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties.

Work started in 2018. In 2020 Opportunity Council temporarily suspended the program due to safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the substantial delays to production, we anticipate more than 90% of the grant funds will be expended by the end of June, 2021.

With 20 total households served, receiving major repairs and rehabilitation, the average project cost was \$17,150, for an approximate total of \$343,000. These figures are estimated because the final few projects are still in progress.

Approximately \$112,500 will have been spent on administration by the end of June, in compliance with the terms of the grant contract.

Approximately \$280,000 in revolving, deferred-payment loans will have been made. These funds, when repaid, will be used for future repair and rehabilitation activities.

The following are examples of repair projects undertaken:

1)

Client was a retiree living in northwest Whatcom County. Her home was unsafe due major electrical problems and deteriorating because of an actively leaking roof. Using CDBG funds we were able to replace roof– adding rigid foam insulation under the new roofing to improve energy efficiency– and upgrade the electrical panel. Addressing these hazards and durability issues allowed her to stay in her home and continue in-home care for several serious medical conditions. Her family was grateful for the work and was reassured that she could safely remain in her home. The property was improved and preserved for future use.

2)

This client was a single elderly woman living in a 1917-built home on Camano Island. CDBG funds allowed us to replace the badly leaking roof and address other health and safety concerns in the home. In addition to a new roof and gutters, we installed a high efficiency electric heating system, a kitchen exhaust fan, and mitigated some lead paint hazards. Correcting the hazards and durability issues allowed for the installation of weatherization improvements, using federal, state, and utility funding. These improvements included insulating the attic, sealing up air leaks, re-supporting sagging floor insulation, replacing a constricted clothes dryer duct, and installing a whole house ventilation fan for improved indoor air quality and moisture management. Our contractor also installed smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide alarm. The dramatic improvements in home durability, safety, and efficiency helped the client her stay in her home and made it more comfortable and affordable to live in.