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Department of Housing and Urban Development Proposes a New Rule Limiting Shelter  
Access for Transgender and Gender Diverse Communities

On Wednesday the Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed a new rule that would limit access to shelters for LGBTQ communities. Nationally one-third of transgender and gender diverse people report experiencing homelessness at some point in their life time according to the 2015 National Transgender Survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality. That rate is even higher here in Washington State at 37%. We need to be focusing time, energy and resources on addressing the root causes that lead our communities to experiencing homelessness - not limiting their access to shelter services.

Proposed rules like this have a direct and negative impact on our communities. Our Economic justice Manager Leo Segovia shares, "The need of safer shelter conditions for trans and gender diverse folks is ever more apparent to us as time and again we refer community to local agencies with them returning quickly with reports of violence and hostility not only from providers but from others being served in shelters."

**From our Executive Director, Karter Booher:**

"This proposed rule would certainly have a disastrous impact on the ability of LGBTQ communities to access life saving services across the country but there should be no confusion about what this means in Washington State and here locally in the City of Seattle and King County. Seattle, King County and Washington State all have clear, consistent and strong anti-discrimination laws in place that protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in places of public accommodation. We know that our communities already struggle to access shelters and other critical services they need but this recent announcement should not discourage transgender and gender diverse communities here in Washington State from reaching out for support. If community members encounter discrimination that prevents them from accessing these services we encourage them to reach out directly to Ingersoll staff for support."

Over the last few months we have been working with the City of Seattle's Human Services Department to examine gaps in current shelter policies that prevent transgender and gender diverse communities from being able to fully access and receive the support they need. While there are serious issues to tackle ahead we are confident that despite the announcement of this proposed rule, together with community leaders and the City of Seattle we can work to increase access to shelters and services for transgender and gender diverse communities.

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