

# Future Homebuyers Organization Launches in Whatcom County, Secures \$1 Million State Grant to Expand Affordable Homeownership

**Bellingham, WA** — Future Homebuyers Organization (FHO), a new nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to affordable homeownership in Whatcom County, announced today that it has received a **\$1 million grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce**. The funding will support FHO's first initiative: helping income-qualified households purchase homes at **Madrona**, a new residential development by Janicki Residential in Bellingham.

FHO was founded to address the widening gap between local wages and home prices, with a mission to ensure that first-time, first-generation, and other buyers with modest incomes have a fair opportunity to build stability and generational wealth through homeownership. The organization partners with developers, community groups, and housing counselors to create pathways into ownership that are often out of reach for many local households.

The Commerce grant will allow FHO to provide **down-payment assistance for seven households earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or below**, helping make homeownership attainable for families who might otherwise be unable to enter the housing market.

“Launching FHO with this level of support is both humbling and energizing,” said **Kerri Burnside**, Board President of Future Homebuyers Organization. “This investment allows us to take immediate action for families who simply need a fair opportunity. The Madrona partnership is the first step toward expanding access to homeownership opportunities across Whatcom County.”

**Madrona**, located at **820 N. State Street near the State & Boulevard roundabout in Bellingham**, offers contemporary homes within walking distance of downtown, featuring elevated views and thoughtfully designed interiors. The development includes both **market-rate residences and a limited number of homes supported through the FHO homeownership program**.

Through its partnership with Janicki Residential, FHO will purchase a small group of homes within the development and pair them with down-payment assistance to help qualified buyers achieve homeownership.

Most homes at Madrona will continue to be offered through traditional market sales.

**Floor plans, pricing, and availability can be viewed at**

[www.janickiresidential.com/madrona](http://www.janickiresidential.com/madrona)

Interested households seeking assistance through the FHO program can begin the process by completing the interest form on FHO's website at <https://www.fhowhatcom.org/buy-a-home>.

“At FHO, we believe homeownership is one of the most effective ways to strengthen families and communities,” said **FHO founder Paul Schissler**. “We’re proud to begin this work with partners committed to expanding responsible homeownership opportunities in our region.”

## **About Future Homebuyers Organization**

Future Homebuyers Organization (FHO) is a nonprofit initiative focused on expanding access to homeownership opportunities in Whatcom County. Through partnerships with developers, housing counselors, and community organizations, FHO works to create practical pathways for first-time and first-generation buyers seeking to enter the housing market.

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