

Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing

CONTACT

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BY THE NUMBERS

(1979-present)

Year Founded: 1979

Location: Yakima, WA

Housing Units Developed:
1,400

Households Assisted: 7,000

Financing Secured: \$150M

The mission of the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH) is to improve the lives of farmworkers and low-income individuals in rural Washington State through affordable housing, advocacy, building financial assets, and other innovative solutions.

As a private, statewide, nonprofit corporation, ORFH develops and helps preserve affordable housing by providing direct, comprehensive development services to local nonprofit corporations, housing authorities, growers/employers, and others interested in developing affordable housing. ORFH is also a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and offers a variety of lending products.

ORFH develops community-based, multifamily rental housing and works directly with the agricultural community to develop on-farm housing that serves the needs of both farmworkers and agricultural employers. ORFH offers all of the necessary services to obtain financing and assure the quality of housing construction and property management.

To date, ORFH has secured and managed over \$150 million dollars to develop more than 1,400 housing units in rural Washington State—serving approximately 7,500 farmworkers, their dependents, and other rural residents. Another 250 housing units are in planning and development and will serve an additional 1,000 residents.

Cosecha Court Apartments

In 2013, ORFH helped the Yakima Housing Authority develop the Cosecha Court apartments in Yakima Valley in central Washington State. ORFH provided the Housing Authority with comprehensive development services, including environmental reviews, land acquisition, and the assemblage of a team of architects, engineers, and contractors. ORFH also secured financing, oversaw construction, and assisted with marketing and property management plans.

Cosecha Court is a high-quality, affordable, rental housing development targeted exclusively to serve seasonal agricultural workers. Located in the Granger, Washington, the 10-unit development includes an on-site manager's unit and can accommodate up to 76 people.

Many unique, green elements were implemented for Cosecha Court. The southern portion of the site is dedicated to a "Solar Garden," which is able to generate enough energy to take Cosecha Court off the power grid during winter months.

The development was financed with \$3 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant program, \$296,000 from the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, and \$254,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Enhancement program.

The USDA Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance program also provides critical operating support. Since Cosecha Court serves seasonal, migrant farmworker households, the Section 521 investment is in the form of an operating subsidy. Without operating support from USDA, Cosecha Court would not have been possible.

