

# Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing

Yakima, WA

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## ABOUT

### IMPACT (2018-2020)

- 436 jobs
- 226 households served through 226 affordable housing units
- 8 housing projects completed
- affordable, quality housing
- \$45.5 million in financing secured
- [www.orfh.org](http://www.orfh.org)

The Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH)'s mission is to improve the lives of farmworkers and other low-income individuals in rural communities through affordable housing, advocacy, building financial assets and other innovative solutions. With more than 36,000 farms operating on over 15 million acres, Washington is a major agricultural state. The migrant and seasonal farmworkers and other low-income residents of rural Washington ORFH serves cannot access affordable rental housing for a variety of reasons, including that Washington state under-produced housing by approximately 225,600 units from 2000 to 2015. Construction of rural housing has not kept up with population increases and an existing shortage of rental units. Poverty rates run high in rural Washington, where seasonal agriculture is a top employer. Farm labor jobs are typically not year-round and are lower paying.

ORFH works with nonprofits and public housing authorities to develop affordable multi-family rental housing throughout rural Washington state for low-income families with children, homeless veterans,

farmworkers, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. ORFH helps guide new construction and rehabilitation developments from start to finish and is a certified CDFI, offering pre-development loans. ORFH celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019 and continues this essential work despite COVID-19.

To date, ORFH has developed more than 2,100 units of affordable, quality housing across rural Washington State that, when fully occupied, provide nearly 11,000 individuals with a decent, stable place to live. USDA Rural Development helps ORFH serve the community via funding that enables the nonprofit and/or public housing authorities to structure rental rates low-income farmworkers and others can afford. The USDA RD helped ORFH better serve the community by being on the team preserving affordable rental housing throughout rural Washington that would otherwise be too expensive to build.

## SUCCESS STORY



### GIBSON GARDENS

Gibson Gardens (GG), in Chelan, WA, was built in 1977. Many components of the building had outlived their expected useful life.

Chelan County is a top tourist destination where second homes are driving housing prices sky high. Property owners increasingly turn their housing into short-term rentals, leaving 3,000 unable to live in Chelan where they work.

ORFH and USDA have a long history of successful projects. USDA RD provided funding to finance the rehab and enable rents to be kept low. ORFH guided Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee Housing Authority (CCWHA) through the process, ensuring it met current code and accessibility requirements.

A key impact is that preservation/rehabilitation costs about half of what would be needed to accomplish new construction. With funding for small scale new construction of low-income housing in remote rural areas virtually non-existent, it makes good sense to keep Gibson Gardens in RD 515 program.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Location: Chelan, WA
- Sponsor: Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee Housing Authority
- Type: "Stay-In-Owner"
- USDA RD MPR: \$1.1 million.
- ORFH: Preservation Revolving Loan Fund. Private bank loan.
- Jobs created or retained: 364 in year one, 99 after that.
- Total project cost: \$1,352,872.