

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congressional investment preserves Fairfield Apartments in the heart of Portland's LGBTQIA+ community

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, federal, state, county, and city housing leaders join Home Forward and Urban League of Portland to celebrate groundbreaking

PORTLAND, ORE. – [Home Forward](#), in partnership with [Urban League of Portland](#), celebrated the groundbreaking of the Fairfield Apartments in downtown Portland today. Fairfield Apartments will be a permanent supportive housing development for people exiting chronic homelessness. The apartment community will preserve 75 units of deeply affordable housing on SW Harvey Milk Street in the heart of Portland's historic LGBTQIA+ community. The project was made possible, in part, by a \$2 million Congressional investment secured by U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

"It is gratifying to see new life breathed into the Fairfield so that it can be used to serve Portlanders in desperate need of stable housing and services close by," said **Sen. Wyden** who visited Fairfield Apartments earlier this week. "I was proud to secure federal funding for this apartment community with supportive services that are proven to support Oregonians getting a roof overhead, not just for one night but for the long haul."

Fairfield Apartments will house up to 75 people exiting chronic homelessness who request culturally specific services within the Black/African American community. Preference will be given to women and people in the LGBTQIA+ community. Residents will pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent, with rental assistance provided by HUD.

"When families and individuals have a stable and safe place to call home and the right support, they can thrive," said **Rep. Bonamici**. "I advocated for funding for the Fairfield to help fill a well-known gap in serving people in the Black and LGBTQI+ communities who are disproportionately represented in Oregon's homeless population. Providing culturally specific services on site at the Fairfield Apartments will empower its residents and open new doors to opportunity."

The renovated ground floor will have community space, supportive services offices and property management offices, as well as commercial space. The building's existing residents have been relocated and have the option to return when Fairfield Apartments reopens. Construction is expected to finish by mid-2024 with units fully occupied in early 2025. Home Forward will serve as the building's owner, property manager, and asset manager, and Urban League of Portland will provide permanent supportive services 24 hours a day. Prosper Portland will own and operate the commercial space.

“Our community faces an affordability crisis and we see it on our streets every day. We are thankful to our Congressional delegation for taking action to help, and we’re proud of the partnerships, particularly with the Urban League and the city of Portland, that will preserve affordable housing in the heart of downtown Portland,” said Home Forward CEO **Ivory Mathews**.

The City of Portland acquired Fairfield Apartments in 2010 and transferred ownership to Home Forward in 2023 to keep the apartments affordable and complete seismic upgrades and other rehabilitation.

“Right now, we need elected officials to commit to doing whatever is needed to preserve and build affordable housing for the most vulnerable in our community,” said **Denetta Monk**, Associate Vice President of Programs at Urban League of Portland. “Unhoused women in the Black community—including those who identify as LGBTQ+—face a triple threat of violence, sexism and racism, making living on the streets extraordinarily dangerous. Fairfield Apartments will be a place of refuge for this community and serve as a beacon of hope.”

Construction and design of Fairfield Apartments is being led by Walsh Construction and Peter Meijer Architect. In addition to the direct Congressional appropriation from HUD, other funding was made possible by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), the voter-approved Supportive Housing Services funding from the Joint Office of Homeless Services, the City of Portland, U.S. Bank, and Key Bank.

Fairfield Apartments at a glance:

- Nine studios and 66 single room occupancies (SROs)
- Shared kitchen and bathrooms
- Community room with computer and wifi access, laundry facilities, bike storage and a common kitchen and pantry
- On-site property management and client-centered supportive services
- Centrally located in downtown Portland
- Public transit, including the MAX line and bus stops, within walking distance
- Grocery store and medical care within walking distance
- Culturally responsive tenant education
- Community kitchen stocked with food from Oregon Food Bank

“The Fairfield Apartments demonstrate our continued commitment to helping address Portland's housing crisis,” said Portland Mayor **Ted Wheeler**. “As Portlanders, we value what makes us different and what brings us together. The story of Fairfield Apartments stands as a reminder not only of the preservation of this historic building, but also the important contribution that the LGBTQ+ community has made to downtown Portland.”

Learn more at ulpdx.org and homeforward.org. View the digital press kit with photos and bios [here](#).

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About Home Forward

Home Forward is the largest provider of affordable housing in the state of Oregon. Its mission is to ensure that the people of the community are sheltered. Home Forward has a special responsibility to those who

encounter barriers to housing because of income, disability, or special need. Go to homeforward.org or call (503) 802-8300 for more information.

About Urban League of Portland

The Urban League of Portland's mission is to empower African-Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security and quality of life. Learn more at ulpdx.org.

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Quotes from other Fairfield Apartments Partners

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: "I am thrilled to be joining today's groundbreaking event for Fairfield Apartments that is bringing us one step closer to providing 75 households with safe, stable housing. Federal investment is critical to supporting local efforts to end homelessness and HUD is proud to contribute \$2 million in Community Project Funding to this property. Together, we can solve homelessness." ~ *HUD Northwest Regional Administrator **Margaret Salazar***

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS): "A strategic focus at OHCS is not just funding new affordable housing but preserving the current housing at an affordable rate because we know that a quality home can have a significant impact on a person's physical, emotional, and mental health. Preservation of affordability is even more important for places like Fairfield Apartments located in the heart of Portland which provides easy access to food, transportation, and basic needs. We want to congratulate Home Forward, Urban League of Portland and many others for partnering once again at a federal, state, county and city level to make this rehabilitation happen." ~ *OHCS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Division Director **Chelsea Bunch***

Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS): "The Fairfield will follow a model that we know is effective in solving homelessness: a combination of affordable housing and supportive services. Those services are made possible because of funding from the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure, making the Fairfield an example of those dollars at work in our community. The Joint Office is proud to fund the Urban League's on-site programming, including mental health services and peer support, that will help future residents transition into housing and stay housed." ~ *JOHS Director **Dan Field***

Prosper Portland: "This district of diverse small and local businesses showed incredible resilience throughout the pandemic and are at the heart of what we all love about Portland," said Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam. "We appreciate all the partners on this project and are pleased to honor the community's desire to maintain retail space in this building as we collectively add to the vitality of this critical portion of our central city." ~ *Prosper Portland Executive Director **Kimberly Branham***

Peter Meijer Architect: “PMA's expertise and passion for historic restoration and housing equality are exemplified in the Fairfield Apartments project. Our team is motivated by the opportunity to design and restore spaces that embody inclusivity, compassion, and enhanced quality of life. Preserving the single-room occupancy units, with the addition of community support spaces, life safety improvements, and seismic upgrades, posed many unique challenges that the entire team collaborated to solve. The building's updated spaces and renovation will help address the supportive housing shortage and preserve a piece of downtown Portland's historic fabric.”~ *Peter Meijer Associate Principal **Halla Hoffer***

Walsh Construction: “Walsh Construction is excited to see construction kick off on the renovation of Fairfield Apartments. The team of Home Forward and Peter Meijer Architects has been great to work with through preconstruction and we look forward to making their goals a reality by revitalizing the structure and MEP systems in the Fairfield to support affordable housing for years to come. ~ *Walsh Construction Senior Project Manager **Bennett Barnwell***