

# HOME FOR EVERY AMERICAN

STATE LEGISLATIVE AWARD: Washington State Rep. Mark Miloscia

**T**he Ending Homelessness Act, passed in 2005 in Washington State, was pioneering legislation that now provides \$15-20 million annually in new resources targeted to county-level 10-Year Plans to end homelessness underway in virtually all the counties of the state. Representative Mark Miloscia was the bill's key sponsor, and his long personal and professional commitment to ending homelessness played a pivotal part in passage of the unprecedented legislation intended to reduce homelessness in Washington by half over the following decade. The new legislation resulted in the creation of the Washington State Interagency Council on Homelessness, established through Executive Order. The Act requires an annual census of the homeless population to be used as the benchmark to determine the success of the investments and plans being implemented.

Following passage of the bill, Representative Miloscia was named Chair of the newly-formed House committee on housing issues. His committee's efforts and his focus on outcome and measurable results have won him praise from across the state, and six plans - representing eight Washington State counties - have now reported reduced homelessness in their communities.

The Ending Homelessness Act charged the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development as the lead agency responsible for ending homelessness in Washington. To fund its goals, the bill added a \$10 surcharge to the recording fee for real estate transactions in Washington. Local governments receive 60 percent of the funds to be used on programs such as shelters, transitional housing, and support to victims of domestic violence. The remaining 40 percent goes to the State to be distributed to local governments as grants to supplement local programs. Counties can levy another \$5 fee by local option to be entirely used within the local county. The State Interagency Council has achieved the coordination of resources between the Washington Department of Correction and the Housing Division of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic development to provide new housing resources for persons returning to the community after incarceration. The State Department of Veterans Affairs is coordinating a jail diversion strategy for veterans in coordination with each of the local 10-Year Plans.