

## 30 YEARS Washington State Housing Trust Fund



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**When I first got here, I had nothing... Now I have so much!"**

**- Max Ledesma  
at Drexel House (Olympia)**

### Veteran Leaves Homelessness Behind

Maximillian (Max) Ledesma was in the Army for eight years. "It wasn't something I enjoyed doing, but I felt like it was service to my country," he said. "I got out of the military and had a few good jobs. I was a chef and I owned and operated a bed and breakfast of sorts. I got married and eventually got divorced, and it all fell apart. I basically gave up and let my wife have everything I owned before I left town. It wasn't long until I found myself living in my car with nothing. That started three years of total homelessness for me. In camps, in the car, wherever."

Max ended up at the Bread and Roses men's shelter, which was on the same property where Drexel House now stands. Drexel House was spearheaded in 2007 by Catholic Community Services at the request of a coalition of area community leaders to fill a critical need in the community for both shelter and housing. It is the first facility in Washington State that combines emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing in one single location, with much-needed services to its clients. As is the case with many affordable housing projects in Washington, the Housing Trust Fund is one of the sources of critical construction financing.

After Drexel House opened, Max was able to get housing in the new facility: "Drexel House put a roof over my head and got me a case manager. It's helped me a lot because I've gotten sick since I've been here and I have a really good support system with the folks here, the staff, people that visit here. It's nice to have somebody to check on you and make sure you are okay. I have no family or anything like that, and since I quit drinking since I've been here, I have had to find new friends.



**Department of Commerce**

Being sober and improving my life is tough stuff, but they help me out a lot. When I first got here, I had nothing... Now I have so much!”

Drexel House partners with the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs to help connect veterans like Max to housing, services, and advocacy. That connection helped Max get professional dental services. “It was to get a job interview or go out and not feel embarrassed,” he said. “[Now] I feel better about myself. This is the kind of stuff that happens here! Without these kinds of programs, people like me just fall through the cracks and disappear. Well, today I am here and I’m happy and getting healthy. Thank you!”

