

PORTLAND HOUSING CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2020





FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FY 2020 was a remarkable year. As the pandemic hovered and changed our operations to virtual, 522 households bought their first homes, a jump of 49% from the previous year. A significant number of the new homeowners, 215, were BIPOC households. In this annual report, we highlight the stories of three new homeowners and celebrate all the new homeowners who bought homes in a difficult and uncertain time.

At Portland Housing Center, we counsel and educate well over a thousand home buyers each year. When we have downpayment resources as we did this year of \$20,000 from NeighborhoodLIFT sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank and NeighborWorks America and the \$90,000 Preference Policy downpayment from the City of Portland, then home buyers can become homeowners in Portland's high-cost market. The affordability gap is filled, and another household realizes the opportunities of wealth and stability with homeownership. More downpayment resources and more BIPOC homeowners is a step in recognizing and addressing Portland's racist history.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe homeownership empowers individuals and families with a sustainable asset to further their right to pursue the quality of life they seek. Through education, one-on-one counseling and financial services, the Portland Housing Center supports first-time home buyers in becoming homeowners. Portland Housing Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase homeownership in the Portland region among households and communities kept from realizing the wealth and opportunities homeownership affords.

WHAT WE DO

CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERED IN FY20:

1,113

COUNSELED

739

EDUCATED

100

NEW IDA SAVERS

\$62,000

MEDIAN INCOME OF NEW HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLDS



NEW HOMEOWNERS
49% INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR

65%

PERCENT USING DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

\$1,759

MEDIAN HOUSE PAYMENT

\$331,000

MEDIAN HOME PURCHASE PRICE

PHC LENDING ACTIVITY

40
\$19,833,347
292
\$7,258,526
534
<1%

First Mortgages
Total First Mortgages
Down Payment Loans
Total Down Payment Loans
Loans in Portfolio
Delinquency Rate of Portfolio

WHO WE HELPED

A dedicated daughter who left her dream home in Atlanta and moved back across country to care for her elderly parents. A survivor of child abuse who overcame homelessness, found hope, and is now a proud homeowner. A pair of young brothers determined to replant roots, so they can thrive. These are just a few of our remarkable home buyers you will meet on the next few pages.

MORE THAN

70

BLACK HOUSEHOLDS
BOUGHT THEIR FIRST
HOME IN FY20



Nicole Eckland Severenson

THE FAVORITE FIRSTBORN

Fara Kelly was living her best life in Atlanta when the record screeched to a halt. Her elderly parents, both retired entrepreneurs and TriMet bus drivers, were ailing. As the oldest of her siblings, Kelly accepted reality, sold her house in the Peach State, and moved back to the Pacific Northwest to care for the people who poured into her.

"I had a great childhood," Kelly says, describing her after school visits to her father's barbershop, House of Style, on 17th and NE Alberta. "All the famous artists would come to my dad for haircuts when they came to town for their concerts," she says. "And when the barbershop conversations became too adult for my ears, he'd give me money and send me across the street for McDonalds," she laughs.

Kelly's new life in Portland came with the realities of adulthood, and the inevitable changes that comes with it. When she returned, she noticed how the landscape she fondly remembers was gone, then economy imploded, and in 2017 her father passed away.

Kelly said she felt hopeless at times, thinking of what she missed. "Between the market crashing, and the gentrification of the area, I felt like I would never get my life back. I didn't know if I would be able to buy a house again."

The Support Specialist for Portland Public Schools took advantage of her Employee Assistance Program to help her cope with the loss of her father. "I realized I barely took time to grieve my dad," she explained.

At the same time, she enrolled in home buying classes at PHC, using the Preference Policy Program and NeighborhoodLIFT to help her buy her home in North Portland. "I was even able to secure extra funds to replace my countertops," she says.

Although her old neighborhood is barely recognizable, the fog is finally lifting. "Just seeing a future for me right now really makes a difference," she says. "I'm still working full-time and taking care of my mother, but I can see light at the end of the tunnel. That's priceless."



Nicole Eckland Severenson

THE SURVIVOR

When Cheranda Curtis closed on her first home, she knew she was there to stay. It was the beginning of the statewide shut down due to COVID-19, but that wasn't the reason.

After living in foster care, struggling with alcoholism, and being homeless for a period of time, Curtis, sober for six years, finally had a place of her own. So while other Americans were panicking about feeling stuck inside, Curtis, 42, was relieved.

"We moved around a lot," Curtis says, describing life with her mother as a small child. By the time she was five years old, she and two of her sisters were in the foster care system where they spent most of their childhood.

"I was a mess," Curtis admits, adding that she lived with her older sister Ebony throughout middle and high school, but began drinking to numb the pain of her childhood wounds. Over time, she developed a dependency, and eventually, she was living on the streets.

"My need for stability drove me towards sobriety," Curtis says. "That was my main goal." That road was bumpy at first. Curtis recalls attending an introductory session sponsored by Portland Housing Center and leaving quickly, full of self doubt.

"I didn't think I qualified," she says. "But I remember these two women from Portland Housing Center chasing me," she laughs, "they were begging me not to leave and offering to help me fill out the paperwork."

A few weeks later, Curtis was enrolled in home buying education classes, and after completing several workshops, she was prepared to purchase a condo located in Northeast Portland. "I know I drove them crazy," she laughs, describing her diligence and tenacity as she went through the process. "I'm pretty sure I drove them nuts with my anxiety."

But Shalonda Menefee, Curtis' counselor at PHC, didn't see it that way. "Cheranda was engaged throughout the whole process," Menefee shares, adding that Curtis was also very good at advocating for herself and that she called to check in once a week.

That persistence paid off. Curtis says she loves living in the area where she grew up and says it's where she plans to stay. Her condo is within walking distance of her job at New Seasons, where she's worked for the past five years. She's ready to bloom where she's replanted. "I might travel, but I will always have my place here," she says. "Especially now that I can take care of myself."



THE MEDIAN AGE OF
FIRST TIME HOMEBUYERS:

35

THE BOOKER BROTHERS
(LEFT) WERE UNDER 30
WHEN THEY CLOSED
ON THEIR FIRST HOME

Nicole Eckland Severenson

PROPERTY BROTHERS

Perseverance is part of Gaelan Booker's DNA.

The freelance designer, 30, also works full time helping young men with special needs. He "gets it honest" as the elders say: his whole family is hardworking. Booker's brother, Kashta, 23, is a carpenter's apprentice. Their grandfather once owned a janitorial company at 17th and Alberta in Northeast Portland. At the time, the area was a hub for Black-owned businesses, so early on, the Booker brothers had many examples of industrious Black men to inspire them.

Given the Bookers' family history, it shouldn't surprise anyone that while some young men were still "living at home," the brothers were thinking of a master plan — a strategy of how to purchase their first property.

"My family owned about three or four houses in North and Northeast Portland," Booker says, adding that he frequently spent time with their grandparents who moved to Oregon during the Great Migration, leaving the Jim Crow South in search of a better life. "My brothers and cousins and I were at Nana and Granddaddy's house all the time."

Hoping to return to the area where they had so many good memories, the brothers enrolled in the Preference Policy Program.

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Two months into their home buying process, Booker lost one of his two jobs. So, drawing on his faith and genetics, he began driving for Uber. His brother still working in construction, picked up side jobs doing anything he could to help get them closer to their goal. "At one point," Booker laughs, "my brother bought a pallet of energy drinks so we could sell them individually just to get extra cash."

Within a year, the brothers closed on a home of their own that's within walking distance of where they made memories growing up.

Booker knows that none of this would have been possible without their Realtor Anthony Pitre, PHC, and their family, and that their strong bond and work ethic helped them reach their goal. "My brother and I are lucky we have each other. Whenever things got rough, we helped each other stay motivated."

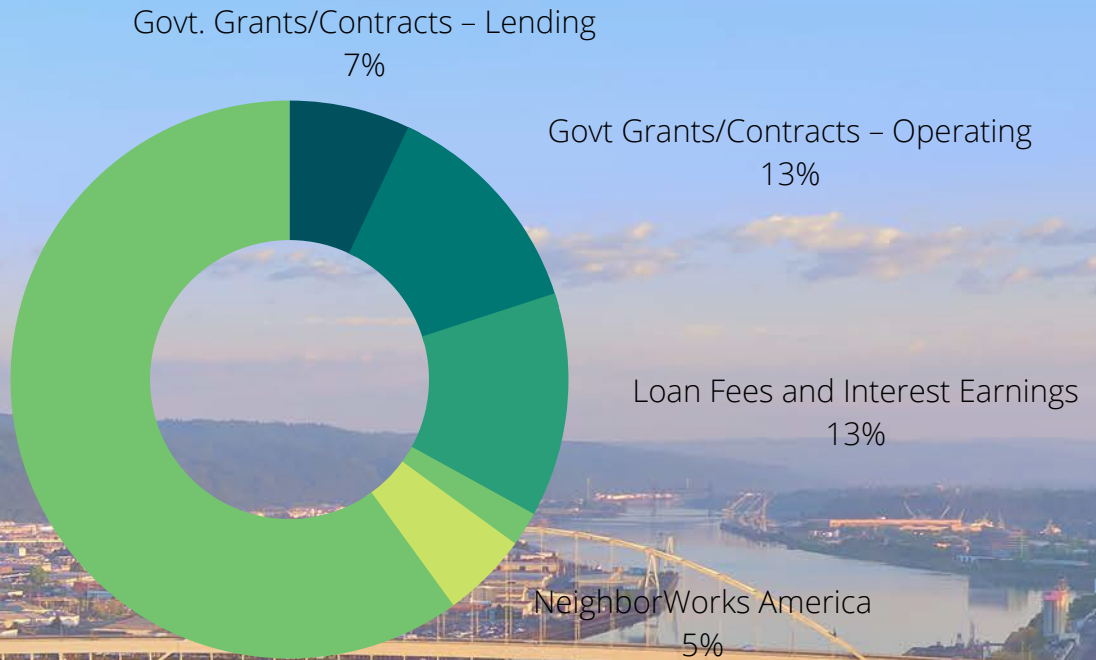
In the end, what brought the Booker Family to Northeast Portland generations ago is what's keeping them there now.

"I just kept saying, we can do this, bro."

FY20 FINANCIAL REPORT

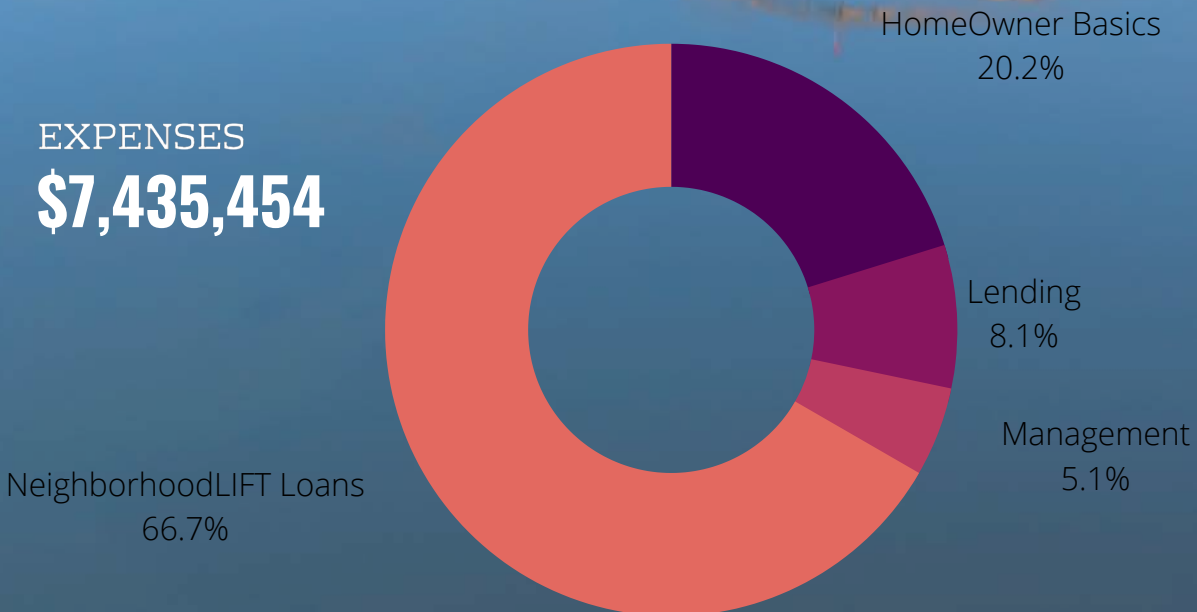
REVENUES

\$8,674,244



EXPENSES

\$7,435,454



OUR STAFF

Peg Malloy, Executive Director

FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Kala Bittner, Finance Director

Debbie Griffis, Accountant

Kade Koblirsch, Loan Servicing Specialist

Darcie Lennox, Office Manager

Sarah Forsythe-Insley, Contracts & Data Management

HOME BUYING TEAM

Jackie Butts, HomeOwnership Program Director

Rob Cochran, Program Coordinator

Humberto Carlos, Bilingual HomeBuying Specialist

Shalonda Menefee, Preference Policy HomeBuying Specialist

Bernice Platz, HomeBuying Specialist

Mayra Paez, Bilingual HomeBuying Specialist

Maria Romero, HomeBuying Specialist

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LENDING TEAM

Heidi Martin, Lending Director

Jessenia Juarez, Bilingual Loan Officer

Rolly Brigham, Loan Processor

Monica Johnson, Loan Processor

BOARD MEMBERS

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Mike Schrader, Past President – Orrick

Diana Nuñez, Vice President – Oregon Environmental Council

Cobi Lewis, Secretary – Umpqua Bank

Jeff Pratum, Acting Treasurer – US Bank

Caitlin Baggott Davis – North Star Civic Foundation

Camille Elmore Trummer – Brink Communications

Jennifer Larsen – HomeStreet Bank

Tanja Lux – Human Solutions

Debra Neal – Windermere Real Estate

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