



Tacoma Housing Authority

APRIL BLACK SELECTED AS NEW TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Black previously served as Deputy Executive Director for 12 years.

TACOMA, WA - October 8, 2021—During a Special Session of the Board of Commissioners for the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA), the Board voted to elect April Black as Executive Director of the Tacoma Housing Authority on terms to be negotiated. Stepping into the role months after the retirement of longtime Executive Director Michael Mirra, April Black will become the first woman to lead the Tacoma Housing Authority in its 81-year history. Ms. Black previously served as Deputy Executive Director and had been acting as Interim Executive Director since Mr. Mirra’s retirement.

“We believe that THA is best served by offering the position of Executive Director to April Black,” said THA Board Chair Stanley Rumbaugh. “After spending twelve years working for THA, with her last six years as Deputy Executive Director, April’s consistent leadership, well-established community relationships, commitment to THA’s mission, and commendable vision for the future of the organization make her the most qualified candidate. The Board has complete confidence in April, and we look forward to working alongside her for years to come.”

The Tacoma Housing Authority had previously hired consulting firm, The Organizational Leadership Edge, to conduct the search for applicants and oversee the selection process. After a series of initial interviews with potential applicants, the Board invited three candidates for in-person interviews and town hall sessions with staff, community partners, members of the public, and the Board. One candidate declined, and April Black and John Hall, previously the Executive Director of the Indianapolis Housing Agency, were the two remaining candidates who completed the town hall and interview series. Immediately following the town halls and interviews, a preliminary vote was held by the Board of Commissioners and John Hall was selected as next Executive Director by a 3-2 margin.

After the initial vote, the Board of Commissioners opened a period of public comment which allowed THA staff and members of the public to provide input on the candidates and the selection process. During this time, the Board also proceeded to vet the chosen candidate and conduct a background and reference check. After reviewing all submitted comments, and completing their analysis of Mr. Hall, the Board of Commissioners elected to revote. At the final vote, April Black was selected as new Executive Director by unanimous decision.

The Board of Commissioners recognizes that the Executive Director selection process suffered from an initial lack of inclusion and provoked conflict. Some of the comments

received exposed both final candidates to rancorous and personal attacks that were unnecessary and inappropriate. The Board of Commissioners regrets and apologizes to the final candidates for subjecting them to this painful and undignified flurry of divisive remarks.

“I want to thank the Board of Commissioners for their diligence throughout the selection process,” said Executive Director April Black. “THA’s Board is a group of dedicated community volunteers working to meet the needs of THA’s many stakeholders, and I am honored that they elected me as Executive Director. THA is an incredible agency staffed by a team of hardworking and talented individuals committed to providing high-quality, stable, and sustainable housing and supportive services to those in need. I am proud to have the opportunity to continue to work alongside our team and lead THA through an exciting and challenging future.”

About Tacoma Housing Authority

Established in 1940, Tacoma Housing Authority provides high-quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need. It does this in ways that help them prosper and help our communities develop equitably. THA develops and manages real estate and provides rental housing. In partnership with thousands of private landlords, it helps families pay the rent in the private rental market. It delivers supportive services to help families succeed as “tenants, parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets who can live without assistance.” THA seeks to do its work in ways that help our community be an “attractive place to live, work, attend school, shop and play,” and that help Tacoma be “safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.” It is to this mission that THA will now devote its full attention and deliver the affordable housing and associated services that Tacoma has come to expect from the agency, and regarding which THA remains a national leader. Learn more at www.tacomahousing.net

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