



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Roots Housing Announces New CEO

SEATTLE—Today, [Community Roots Housing](https://www.communityrootshousing.org) (Community Roots) announces the appointment of Colleen Echohawk as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) effective as of October 6, 2025, following the retirement of longtime CEO Christopher Persons.

Echohawk brings over 20 years of experience as an executive leader, small business owner, and community organizer to the role. This includes serving as Executive Director of Chief Seattle Club, where she led the effort to create nearly \$100 million in new affordable housing in Seattle, and CEO of Eighth Generation, a Native-designed art and lifestyle brand. She is an active member of the board of trustees for both Seattle Foundation and Seattle Colleges. An established champion of Seattle's Native and under-resourced populations, Echohawk is an enrolled member of the Kithehaki Band of the Pawnee Nation and a member of the Upper Athabaskan people of Mentasta Lake.

Working closely with the board of directors and senior staff, Echohawk will help to advance Community Roots' mission to create inclusive, affordable housing and foster thriving, just communities. "I am absolutely honored to welcome Colleen Echohawk as the next CEO of Community Roots Housing," said Board Chair Frank F. Alvarado III. "I'm confident that Colleen's leadership will allow this organization to deliver and preserve affordable housing where it is most needed, while serving as a regional leader on the collective effort to address the housing crisis."

"I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve as CEO of Community Roots Housing," said Echohawk. "Affordable housing is one of the most urgent issues facing our city and our country, and it is deeply connected to my lifelong commitment to social justice. For me, this work is about more than buildings—it is about dignity, belonging, and hope. I am eager to work alongside our residents, staff, board, and community partners to ensure that together we create inclusive, welcoming neighborhoods where every person has the opportunity to thrive."

"Following a yearlong planning process, I am personally excited to spend the next month working alongside Colleen as she transitions into the CEO role here at Community Roots Housing," said Chris Persons, outgoing CEO. "Our industry is facing many challenges, but I am confident that Colleen has the

steady hand, strategic vision, and deep understanding of regional dynamics to help lead this organization forward.”

Echohawk joins the organization at a time of growth; in the next several months, Community Roots’ transit-oriented housing development, Copperleaf Northgate, will open adjacent to the Northgate Link light rail station. This project will deliver 232 new affordable apartments and a 10,000 square foot daycare center to the neighborhood. In White Center, Community Roots is nearing completion on a joint development with the White Center Community Development Association to build the White Center HUB, a dynamic health and family-focused community center, alongside a 76-unit affordable housing complex, Canopy White Center. On Capitol Hill, construction is underway on the Constellation Center, Community Roots’ new mixed-use building developed in partnership with YouthCare, which will include an education and employment resource hub, 84 new affordable apartments, and 15 units designed specifically for youth exiting homelessness.

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About Community Roots Housing

Everyone has the right to a quality, affordable home. At Community Roots Housing, this truth drives our work. By embracing community-led development and engaging in deep-rooted partnerships, we’re fostering vibrant, equitable communities where everyone has access to safe, affordable, and welcoming homes. Today, with over 40 apartment buildings and nearly 2,400 residents, we continue our commitment to build community with and for people. Learn more at communityrootshousing.org.