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# Africatown Launches Affordable Housing Alert Line

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Staff

Stop talking and text!

Africatown launches new Housing Action Alert Platform

Text HOME to 206 309 6324

Seattle, WA - Africatown Community Land Trust has announced the launch of a Housing Action Alert Platform in direct response to the overwhelming demand for affordable housing in the Central District of Seattle. The urgent demand for affordable housing in the Central District was made very apparent two weeks ago when the appointment phone lines for the new Liberty Bank Building crashed less than 30 minutes after opening due to overwhelming call volume. The phone system, which was designed by Verizon and Google, ultimately came back online a short time later and by the time the phone lines were officially closed later in the week, literally, thousands of calls came in from the community.

According to Wyking Garrett, CEO of Africatown Community Land Trust, what occurred earlier this month dispels the common mainstream misconception that African Americans do not want to live in the Central District and reinforces the current outrageous demand for affordable housing in the city.

Clearly, when you have literally thousands of phone calls coming in for a building that only has 115 units, the demand by those in our community that have been displaced due to gentrification as well as the ones that remain in the CD but are vulnerable to increased rents is high and undeniable, said Garrett.

In response to the demand, Africatown is launching several initiatives to keep the community engaged around the affordable housing issue. The most recent initiative, announced today, is a text messaging platform. Citing recent research that many people these days are not reading emails and can at times be overwhelmed by social media messaging, text messaging appears to to be the most effective medium to reach the masses.

The Africatown Housing Action Alerts (AHAA) is a text messaging platform in which those community members that want to become involved in solving the affordable housing crisis, as well as those who are currently seeking housing, can simply text their name and the word HOME to 206 309 6324 to be added to the AHAA database. Members can expect text message alerts when new affordable housing opportunities enter the market, online resources, as well as when community meetings or political

engagement around the affordable housing issue arise.

The Liberty Bank Building is an affordable housing development located in the heart of the Central District on 24th and Union and sits on the land where the original Liberty Bank, the very first African American owned bank in the Pacific Northwest, opened its doors to the community 50 years ago. What Garrett says is that 115 units is a good start but a literal drop in the bucket when you consider the demand for affordable housing, particularly for those who have faced consistent systemic barriers with economic mobility.

What the Liberty Bank Building has proven is that one building is not enough, 115 units is not enough, we need 10 more buildings like the Liberty Bank Building before we can even begin to say that we are really seeing sustainable change.

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