

MEETING THE MOMENT: The 2023 Housing Levy

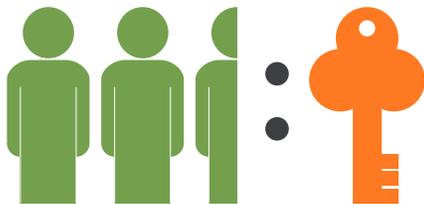


Seattle
Office of Housing

Increased housing costs threaten Seattle's livability

Years of increases in rents and new residents — without comparable increases in new housing — are leading to evictions, homelessness, and displacement. The COVID-19 pandemic and inflation accelerated these impacts. Low-wage workers and people of color are hit hardest, with many long-time residents forced to move outside of Seattle in search of affordable rents. While we cannot solve this crisis with the Seattle Housing Levy alone, it is one of the most important solutions.

New housing isn't keeping up with job growth



For every 2.6
jobs created...

only 1 housing
unit was built.

2011-2019

SOURCE City of Seattle, 2020; Emsi, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Housing Levy 101

The housing levy creates funds that are invested by the Seattle Office of Housing over a period of seven years. These funds then go towards:



1. Building affordable housing for folks who are priced out of the private housing market: our grocery clerks, child care workers, educators, and people experiencing homelessness.

2. Supporting home ownership by acquiring and preserving permanently affordable units, and helping low-income homeowners with down payments and emergency support.



3. Maintaining and preserving housing that is currently affordable to low-income families and individuals, to extend the life of the buildings and keep people housed.

4. Recruiting and paying a livable wage to the workforce who provides necessary maintenance to our buildings and support services to people who live there.



What does it cost to live in Seattle?

Housing is considered affordable when it does not consume more than 30% of a household's income, leaving 70% available for important expenses like food, transportation, and health care. The stories below show an affordable monthly rent for each household and the type of apartment they can afford—the challenge is actually finding one available. None of the households below can afford to buy their own home.



Jaime and Carl want to buy a home, but they can't afford the downpayment. They can afford a 2-bedroom apartment, where their elderly mother and daughter share a room.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Jaime | Construction Worker | \$50,900 |
| Carl | Art Teacher | \$53,352 |
| Rosalia | Elderly Parent | \$0 |
| Jade | Child | \$0 |
| Household Income | | \$104,252 |
| Affordable monthly rent | | \$2,606 |



Nora has to spend more than she can afford to rent a studio apartment. She often has to choose between paying for food and paying off bills.

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Nora | Graduate Student | \$52,452 |
| Household Income | | \$52,452 |
| Affordable monthly rent | | \$1,311 |



Gordon and Ellis couldn't afford housing independently. As roommates, they can afford a 1-bedroom, where Ellis sleeps on the couch.

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|----------|
| Gordon | Permanent Supportive Housing Staffperson | \$45,611 |
| Ellis | Retail Salesperson | \$37,200 |
| Household Income | | \$82,811 |
| Affordable monthly rent | | \$2,070 |



Richie and Renee are expecting a baby. They'd like a 1-bedroom, but can only afford a studio apartment.

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|
| Richie | Barista | \$31,200 |
| Renee | Dishwasher | \$31,200 |
| Household Income | | \$62,400 |
| Affordable monthly rent | | \$1,560 |

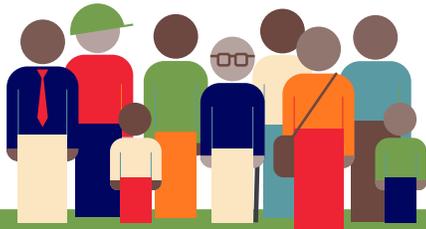
SOURCE 2022 Income and Rent Limits, City of Seattle Office of Housing. CoStar, Market Effective Rents, 2022.



Scaling to meet the need of this moment

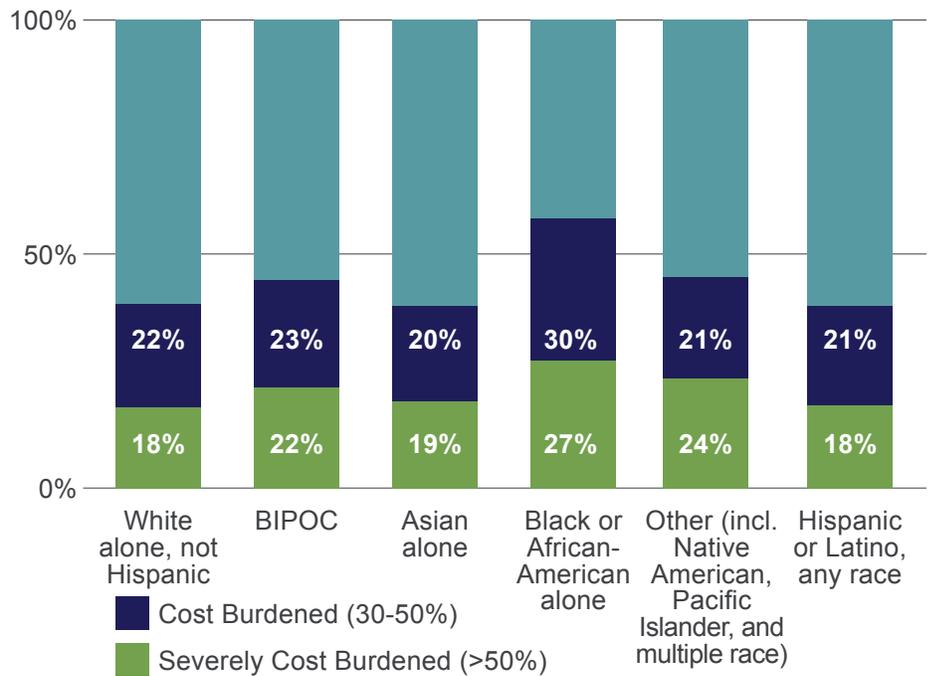
This year's levy will create more than 3,000 affordable homes, including permanent supportive housing, that will be affordable for a minimum of 50 years.

It will also create opportunities for low-income individuals and families to purchase their own homes, or to stay in the homes they already own.



A disproportionate number of households of color are moderately or severely housing cost burdened

SOURCE HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates); BERK, 2020.



A community-informed solution

The input of community synthesized with extensive analysis of current housing needs, development costs, and projected availability of other sources of funding informed the 2023 levy. A months-long engagement process reached members of the public and staff from 49 organizations representing affordable housing developers, BIPOC communities, and local experts in housing and homelessness.

A foundation for individual and community health and safety

The stability of permanent housing improves physical and mental health. People need housing first, before they can engage in services—from behavioral health to job training to parenting support.

The Housing Levy invests in recruiting and paying the skilled workers who support affordable housing residents in maintaining their housing.

Subsidized housing protects children from harmful health risks

↑35% Greater chance of being classified as a 'well' child.

↓28% Lower risk of being seriously underweight.

↓19% Lower risk of being food insecure.



SOURCE Children's HealthWatch.

A proven solution

2016 Levy Outcomes

Low-income homeowners assisted

Goal: 280

Actual: 370

Rental homes preserved

Goal: 350

Actual: 530

Rental homes produced

Goal: 2,150

Actual: 2,741

...and counting!

The Housing Levy has delivered year after year, helping a range of people get housed and stay housed:

- Seniors
- Intergenerational households
- Low-income workers
- People with disabilities
- Families with children
- People experiencing homelessness

More than 95% of households who received homelessness prevention assistance from 2016 levy funds were still in stable housing after one year.



16,000

The estimated number of people living in levy-funded housing at any given time

SOURCE City of Seattle Office of Housing.

Housing Levy dollars are trusted

County, State, and Federal agencies, as well as private financiers, know that an affordable housing development with Levy funds is a good investment. Every 2016 Housing Levy dollar invested has been matched by more than \$3.50 from other sources of public and private investment.

Our choices today will impact housing affordability for years to come. The Housing Levy is one of our most important tools, among many, for addressing the affordability crisis.



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Share your thoughts on the levy and affordable housing with your council members.

seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council