

Invest in Seattle's Future: how today's commitments will lead to a more affordable and equitable Seattle

Get involved in this year's annual City budget process!

Voice your support for essential programs that make our city livable for all, especially those programs that fund affordable housing and community-led anti-displacement work.



See full schedule [here](#).

The Commission is concerned about Seattle's housing affordability crisis and its impact on displacement and livability. Seattleites should be aware and engage on these issues, as these issues impact everyone. The City's budget process is where the solutions that we advocate for in the Comprehensive Plan, the City's vision for the future of Seattle, and other long-range planning efforts must be resourced for implementation.

The City faces a large budget deficit this year and, as leadership works to balance the budget, we want to reinforce the need to continue to fund affordable housing and anti-displacement projects in order to meet the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Seattle must invest in the vision of a more equitable, affordable, and livable city. Learn how to join the budget process here.

The City cannot slow down now on investments in affordable housing and preventing displacement when the need is still great. Progress is at last being made. To build the future we've collectively imagined, we need to invest in the vision.

How the budget process impacts the long-term vision:

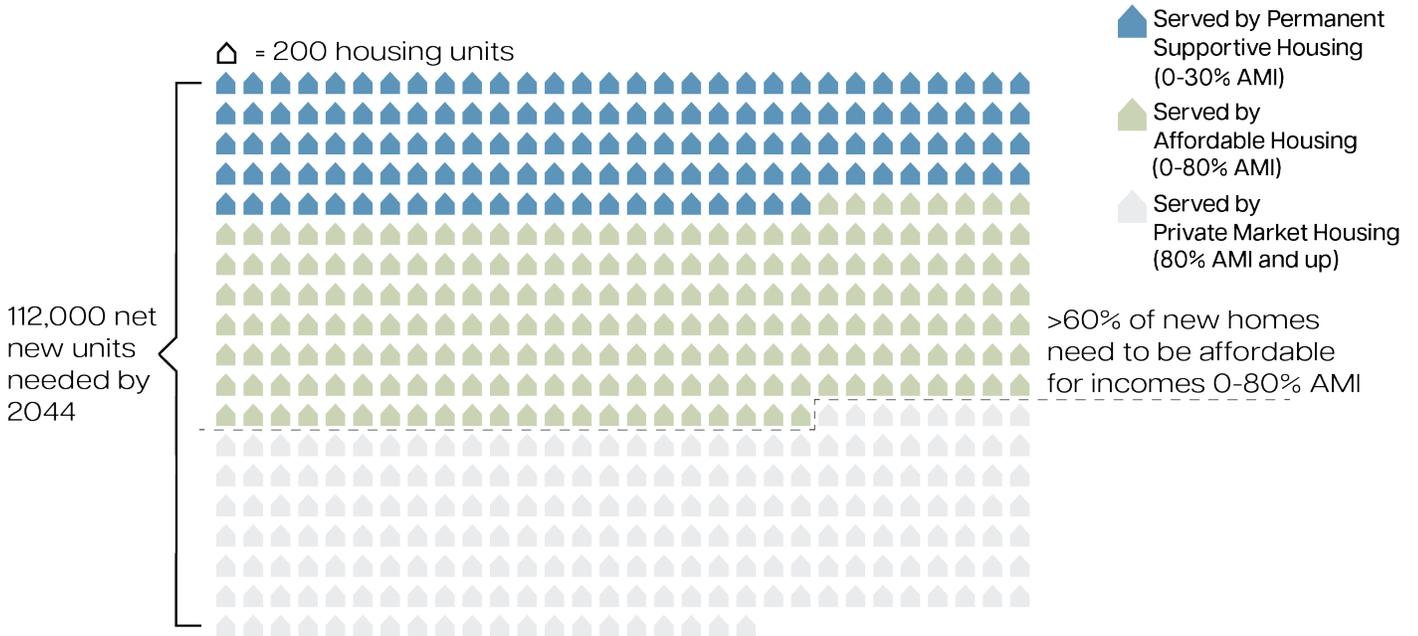
- Decisions in this budget cycle will set our path for implementing the vision described in the [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan](#). To start implementation of the 20-year plan off on the right foot, it is critical for programs that support the goals of the Plan to be funded now, not next year, and not in a few years. **Change moves slowly, and we need to start now, with sustained funding into the future.**
- **Housing, especially affordable housing, is fundamental.** The needs are well documented, through work in the draft Comprehensive Plan, the draft Housing Appendix, and past work of the Commission.
- **The desire for abundant housing is reinforced time and time again by community outreach.** We understand that the amount of funding Seattle needs to meet affordable housing goals far outpaces the amount we've been able to invest in the past, so we must preserve every penny and look to expand funding sources to approach the vision.
- The City's commitment to preventing displacement requires sustained investment in a broad array of strategies and programs over many budget cycles to be beneficial to all communities, especially those most vulnerable. **Continued support is critical for the vision of an equitable, affordable, and livable city.**

The benefits of affordable housing are clear - abundant affordable housing helps prevent homelessness and displacement, leads to healthier community members, and ultimately to safer, thriving communities.



Housing Affordability and Livability in Seattle: What is at stake?

Seattle’s rate of housing production has not kept up with population growth in recent decades and, as a result, a large gap exists between the number of homes we have and the number of homes we need.



Source: Seattle Planning Commission adapted from Office of Housing presentation to City Council.¹

The illustration above shows that not only does Seattle need to produce at least 112,000 new housing units by 2044, but more than 60 percent of those units need to be affordable to households making at or below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). This means that how Seattle approaches funding for affordable housing will be a critical part of how our overall housing problem is solved. The private market will not produce housing at this price point on its own. To produce units affordable at this level, the government needs to step in to provide developer incentives and subsidies. Seattle Office of Housing directs most of its funds towards producing and preserving housing affordable to households making 0 to 80 percent AMI.

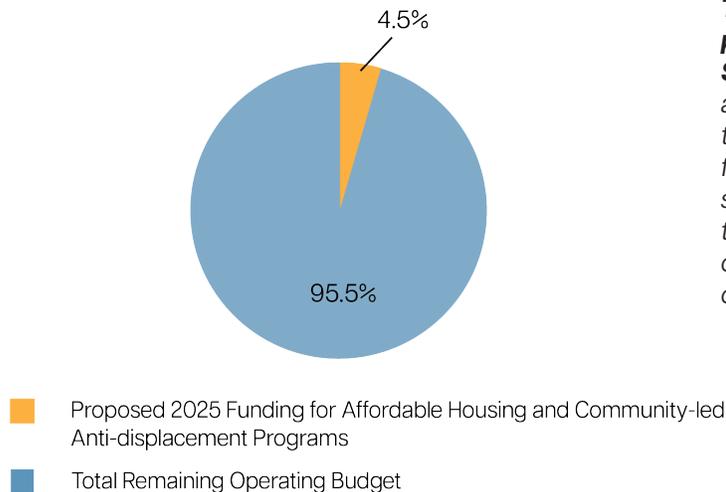
The gap in the housing supply is directly related to negative outcomes like displacement, homelessness, and high rates of housing cost burden in Seattle. If the housing gap isn’t addressed now and is allowed to grow, the impacts will continue to affect us all. Impacts will compound over time, with long-term consequences. A growing gap in access to housing will be particularly harmful for households of color and low-income households, who are already more likely to be spending more than they can afford on their housing.²

Funding for affordable housing and anti-displacement work was intentionally increased in the last several years. Dedicated resources were secured to address the growing housing shortfall, patterns of displacement, and a history of underinvestment in communities of color. Since 2021, over 3,100 new units of affordable rental housing and 70 new permanently affordable homeownership units have opened with the support of funding from the Office of Housing.³ Efforts to mitigate displacement, such as funding community-led projects through the Equitable Development Initiative and the aligned Equitable Development Zoning effort, demonstrate the increasing momentum the city has seen in addressing these challenges.



City Council must address a \$251 million deficit in the general fund as they build the final budget for the 2025-2026 biennium.⁴ As they deliberate, it is important that funding levels for affordable housing and community-led anti-displacement work are maintained or increased relative to their current proportion of City spending in the 2024 budget. The chart below shows the proposed 2025 budget dedicates only a small portion of the overall budget to these programs at 4.5 percent, which is a slight decrease from the 4.7 percent dedicated to this work in 2024.⁵ As the overall City operating budget grows to accommodate rising costs, funding for these programs should also grow proportionally so Seattle’s work on affordable housing and community-led anti-displacement can keep up with inflation and the rising costs of these projects.

Percent of City Operating Budget Dedicated to Affordable Housing and Community-Led Anti-Displacement Programs
Proposed 2025 Budget



The estimated need for funding to provide enough affordable housing in Seattle by 2044 is \$30.4 billion.⁶ Not all this need can nor should be met by the City’s budget alone. Other sources for funding, such as federal dollars and state grants, play a role. Given the scale of the need, however, every dollar the City can provide counts and gets us closer to closing the gap.

Source: The pie chart is based on figures presented in the Mayor’s Proposed 2025-2026 Budget and presentations to City Council provided by the Office of Housing and the Office of Planning and Community Development. See note 5 for details and full references.

The City must continue to support the programs and departments that are working on the complex puzzle of housing affordability and livability in Seattle. That requires funding for affordable housing and for the connected work of homelessness prevention and support, zoning and land use changes to allow more housing, community-led work to address displacement, and continued community outreach to guide the City’s efforts.

Seattle’s work on large-scale investment in affordable housing and a more equitable approach to development is still in its early stages. The physical projects take many years to design, fund, and build. We need to allow time for these programs to grow and meet their full potential - the benefits are worth the wait.

Our collective vision for Seattle is at risk if programs for subsidized affordable housing and community-led anti-displacement projects are not fully funded in the budget this year and in future years.

How to get involved:

Get involved by following the City budget process this year and speaking up for programs that support this work. Learn about the proposed budget [here](#). You can let City Council know about programs and initiatives you want them to fund in several ways:

1. Provide public comment at a [public hearing on the budget](#).
2. Write a letter or email to City Council.
(Contact all Councilmembers by emailing council@seattle.gov)
3. Contact your [district’s Councilmember](#) directly.

Notes

- 1 The housing need illustration uses data presented by the Office of Housing to the Housing and Human Services Committee of the Seattle City Council in May of 2024. Slide 7. The presentation slides can be found here: <https://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13017636&GUID=F27FC182-B7B1-46DD-88C6-C598BCFEC5AC>
- 2 One Seattle Draft Plan Housing Appendix, 2024, City of Seattle, Page 43. <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/SeattlePlan/OneSeattlePlanDraftHousingAppendix.pdf>
- 3 Compiled by Seattle Planning Commission from Office of Housing Annual Investment Reports from 2021, 2022, and 2023. <https://seattle.gov/housing/data-and-reports>
- 4 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, City of Seattle, Page 15. <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/FinanceDepartment/2526proposedbudget/2025-2026%20Proposed%20Budget%20Document.pdf>
- 5 The numbers used to calculate the percentage of the total operating budget spent on affordable housing and community-led anti-displacement work for both 2024 and 2025 came from the following sources: dollars allocated to affordable housing for 2024 and 2025 as well as the total operating budget for 2024 and 2025 came from a City Budget Office presentation to City Council on the 2025-2026 Mayor's Proposed Budget on September 25, 2024. See pages 24 and 34 of the following document <https://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=PA&ID=1220974&GUID=40BF3501-2C04-4710-A976-428792E94C96>; dollars allocated to the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) for 2024 and 2025 are from the Office of Planning and Community Development's presentation to City Council on the 2025-2026 Mayor's Proposed Budget on September 27, 2024. See page 38 of the following document <https://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=PA&ID=1220975&GUID=EF9F87D8-9221-4076-8FA5-A7394B83E99B>.

The numbers used to calculate the percentages are as follows: For 2024, adopted Affordable Housing funding is \$339,300,000 and funding for EDI is \$25,320,591, which sums to a total of \$364,620,591. The total operating budget for 2024 is \$7,839,000,000. The total funding for affordable housing and EDI represents 4.7% of the total operating budget in 2024. For 2025, proposed funding for affordable housing funding is \$342,400,000 and proposed funding for EDI is \$26,567,430, which sums to a total of \$368,967,430. The total proposed operating budget for 2025 is \$8,262,000,000. The total for affordable housing and EDI represents 4.5% of the total operating budget in 2025. The pie chart uses these same calculations and sources to show the percentage of the total operating budget dedicated to these programs in 2025.
- 6 One Seattle Plan Draft Housing Appendix. 2024. City of Seattle. Page 133. <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/SeattlePlan/OneSeattlePlanDraftHousingAppendix.pdf>