

# How to Advocate for Affordable Housing

Housing plays out at every level: Local, state and federal.

This session will cover:

- What we are seeing
- What advocates are working on
- What other housing advocates aren't so engaged with
- The Housing Trust Fund
- Key players
- Data points you should know
- What we are asking legislators

The **No. 1 thing you can do?** Start a conversation with your local and state leaders.

Explain:

- People with developmental disabilities need affordable, accessible and safe housing ... and the supports to live independently.

Get involved with the **wider housing movement**. Help them, and help educate those who aren't aware about the housing needs of people with DD. We work through the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. They have good resources.

Advocates for housing **stability specialists alongside affordable homes** Advocate for investments into **home and community based Medicaid waivers**.

Speak up for **fees** and the value they can bring a community in terms of homeless prevention and housing stabilization.

**Insist that government use data**. We have known vulnerable populations; we should be forecasting anticipated caseload so communities can partner to meet their needs.

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# What we are seeing:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Increasing costs forcing people further out – often away from natural supports of family and community, possibly further away from transit options, job opportunities, or care facilities
- Marginalized people feeling even more marginalized – struggling to find and keep housing, and in some cases staying in situations that aren't safe. Perhaps not understanding tenant rights or where to seek help
- Increased dislocation as rents increase and properties change ownership. More churn
- Changing neighborhoods – with services not always keeping up

# What advocates are working on:

## Increase funding for building and preserving affordable homes

What this may look like:

- Tax incentives, or investments in the Housing Trust Fund – this can be federal, state or local
- Local negotiations, such as requiring developers to build a certain number of affordable units in return for allowing taller buildings
- Raising taxes to invest in housing. Note: The state dictates the type and amount of money that can be raised locally through taxes and fees

## Prevent homelessness

What this may look like:

- Address root causes including trauma (violence, substance abuse, etc);
- Address poverty - invest in job growth and skill development; access to post-secondary education; social and human services to stabilize people and help them build necessary skills
- Ensure access to healthcare, including mental and behavioral health care
- Ensure access to supports needed to develop or maintain life skills (habilitative care)

## Increase stability for people living on low incomes

What this may look like:

- Limit the churn – moving is very expensive, and in today's market people are being forced to move more often. Give landlords incentives to keep renters (or disincentives to lose them)
- Try to prevent evictions – offer landlord negotiation; offer help to contain setbacks (care repair, etc), offer financial counseling – whatever the individual needs to stabilization, get through the bad patch, and start rebuilding. This is also referred to as housing stabilization
- Make sure they have access to supports – Medicaid, SSI, SSDI, SNAP, etc

## Remove barriers to finding and keeping a home

What this may look like:

- Source of income discrimination / overcome landlord concerns about damage to property
- Help with conflict resolution or negotiation
- More accessible units

# What other housing advocates aren't so engaged with:

## Ongoing support that people with DD need to live independently

- There is NO forecasting of developmental disability caseload. There is for Aging and Long-term Assistance, but not for people who use services provided through the Developmental Disability Administration.

## Planning for community needs of people with DD

- Lack of forecasting affects planning and capacity building. It means other service providers have little awareness of the DD community or its needs.
- Counties and cities can't be good partners when they are left in the dark

## Forecasting data for DD

- There is no data to plan for housing and supports for the DD community
- There is no transition planning from early intervention to early learning, to K-12, to adulthood and later aging
- There is no impetus to proactively plan for an aging DD community, or to address service "deserts" where care is difficult to secure because of lack of providers, or other barriers

## Understanding the unique housing and employment needs of people with DD

- The state's new Medicaid demonstration project includes ideas like supportive housing and supportive employment (not the same as what we do with DDA-administered waivers, but similar ideas).
- But outside of the DD community there is not a lot of engagement around developing viable living options for adults with DD, or for increasing access to our Core Medicaid waiver for home and community based services, which in turn offers residential supports through Supported Living, State Operated Living Alternatives, Companion Homes, and Alternative Living Services
- Under the Aging and Long-term Support Administration (AL TSA), disability is overshadowed by aging, which is troublesome because the needs of individuals differ

**THESE ARE AREAS THAT PEOPLE WITH DD AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS NEED TO SPEAK TO**

# HOUSING TRUST FUNDS:

Nationally, housing trust funds operate at all levels: Federal, state, county, local

They support the construction, acquisition, and preservation of affordable housing and related services to meet the housing needs of low-income households.

Ideally, housing trust funds are funded through dedicated revenues like real estate transfer taxes or document recording fees to ensure a steady stream of funding rather than being dependent on regular budget processes. Our state funds them in the capital budget.

Since 1986, WA's Housing Trust Fund has awarded almost \$1 billion in funding and helped build or preserve nearly 47,000 units of affordable housing. Funds are awarded through a competitive process.

Sources of funding for **state** housing trust funds often include:

- Unclaimed Property or Lottery Funds
- Interest on Broker, Title or other Real Estate Escrow Accounts
- Document Recording Fees
- General Funds
- Government General Obligation (GO) Bond Revenues
- Real Estate Transfer Taxes
- State Income Taxes
- Unspent Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Reserves
- Section 8 Reserves
- Interest from Budget Stabilization or Surplus Funds
- Interest from Tenant Security Deposits
- Penalties on Late Real Estate Excise Taxes (taxes on the purchase price of real estate)
- Origination Fee

Sources of funding for **county** housing trust funds often include:

- Impact Fees
- Inclusionary Zoning In-Lieu Fees (fees paid in-lieu of providing affordable housing in a development)
- General Funds
- Private or Foundation Contributions
- Restaurant Taxes
- Government General Obligation (GO) Bond Revenues
- Real Estate Transfer Taxes
- Condominium Conversion Fees
- Sales of County Surplus Land
- Document Recording Fees
- Sales Taxes
- Developer Proffers (fees paid to make a development more appealing for government approval)

Sources of funding for **local** housing trust funds often include:

- General Funds
- Capital Improvement Project Funds
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Funds
- Impact Fees
- Hotel Occupancy Taxes
- Public Benefit Funds
- Government General Obligation (GO) Bond Revenues
- Condominium Conversion Fees
- Real Estate Transfer Taxes
- Sales Taxes
- Property Taxes, including dedicated levies

- Housing Excise Taxes
- Inclusionary Zoning In-Lieu Fees
- Disposal Waste Fees
- State Funding Allocations
- Sales of City Surplus Land (land purchased by the city that is no longer needed)

- Parking Garage Proceeds (revenue from city-owned parking garage operation)
- Developer Proffers (fees paid to make a development more appealing for government approval)
- Permit Fees

## Key players

The state **House** was much more effective at moving housing bills in 2018. Following are representatives from King County who sponsored or co-sponsored legislation that passed both chambers. (“x” indicates number of successful bills they signed on to.)

Macri*	xxxxxx
Kloba	xxxxxx
Senn*	xxxxx
Pollet	xxxxx
Stanford	xxxxx
Frame	xxxx
Goodman	xxxx
Gregerson	xxxx
McBride	xxxx
Tarleton	xxxx
Santos	xxxx
Slatter*	xxx
Bergquist	xx
Clibborn	xx
Fitzgibbon	xx
Kagi	xx
Pettigrew*	xx
Cody	x
Hudgins	x
Orwall	x
Ryu	x

\*Lead sponsor on one of the bills

In the state **Senate**, Senator Fain had a lead bill that would have given developers tax breaks for affordable units, but it did not get a floor vote. Senator Froct led on source of income discrimination, but ultimately a companion bill in the House bill passed instead. Following are senators from King County who signed on to their bills. (“x” indicates if they signed onto one, or both)

Froct*	xx
Keiser	xx
Miloscia	xx
Pedersen	xx
Fain*	x
Chase	x
Hasegawa	x
Kuderer	x
Mullet	x
Palumbo	x

\*Lead sponsor on one of the bills

# Data points you should know

In 2016, there were **97,535** people with disabilities in Washington living only on SSI

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for our state is **\$779 per month**

The average monthly rent for a basic one-bedroom apartment in Washington is \$956.

That is 123% of the monthly income of someone living on SSI - leaving no money for food, transportation, clothing or other necessities

- The average monthly rent for a basic one-bedroom apartment in the Seattle-Bellevue area is \$1,246.
  - That is 160% of the monthly income of someone living on SSI.
- The average monthly rent for a basic one-bedroom apartment in the Tacoma area is \$888.

The alternative to homelessness is institutional care (nursing home, RHC, jail, mental hospital) at an average cost of \$593 per person per day.

## What we are asking legislators:

Please commit to a five-prong approach to housing solutions. INCLUDE CASE FORECASTING FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

- Communities need adequate levels of affordable, accessible, and safe housing
- People with developmental disabilities (DD) need access to Medicaid waiver/personal care supports to live independently. Without them, they face homelessness or costly institutionalization

The state must forecast for developmental disability caseload, just as it already does for age-related long-term care. Communities lack reliable data to plan for and meet the needs vulnerable citizens, including their housing needs.

### Housing Takes 5!

1. Increase funding for building and preserving affordable homes
2. Prevent homelessness
3. Increase stability for people living on low incomes
4. Remove barriers to finding and keeping a home
5. **Plan for known vulnerable populations.** Start forecasting for DD caseload and transitions