

CAPITAL BUDGET: INVEST IN AFFORDABLE HOMES AND INCREASE SHELTER CAPACITY

The current problem:

Before the pandemic, Washington was already facing an affordable housing and homelessness crisis. To afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent, a household would need to earn more than \$30 per hour. There was a shortage of over 195,000 homes affordable and available to very low-income households. Almost 23,000 people were identified experiencing homelessness during the point in time count in January 2020, representing a 6% increase in overall homelessness. Unsheltered homelessness increased by 13%.

Legislative solution:

The Legislature should follow the Governor's lead and invest \$250 million to build and preserve affordable homes and \$110 million to increase shelter capacity and rapidly acquire hotels and motels for shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

- Invest \$240 million for the Housing Trust Fund to build new affordable homes.
- Invest \$10 million to purchase and preserve affordable housing at risk of loss.
- Invest \$70 million for rapid acquisition of property for shelter, transitional, and permanent supportive housing.
- Invest \$40 million in enhanced shelter capacity grants.

Why it matters:

Everyone should have a safe, healthy, affordable place to live and the Housing Trust Fund is the state's best tool for making that possible. These investments will preserve approximately 1,500 currently affordable homes and build approximately 3,390 new ones.

Housing is the solution to homelessness. These investments will address the immediate need to move people experiencing homelessness into safe shelter during the pandemic and address our longstanding housing crisis.

Every Housing Trust Fund dollar leverages another \$5 in additional funding to create homes for families, seniors, veterans, farmworkers, people leaving homelessness, people with disabilities, and more.

Since the start of the pandemic, the state has lost shelter capacity because of social distancing requirements and volunteers being unable to safely help. These investments will help counter that and move people currently living in parks, under bridges, and in vehicles into safe indoor spaces.

The pandemic has provided both the need and the opportunity to re-envision how we respond to unsheltered homelessness. Shelter providers are seeing people's lives transformed when they move from crowded congregate shelters into hotels and motels where they have their own door, their own bathroom, and feel safe and secure. These investments would expand safe shelter through the pandemic and for the long term.