

2025 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Rent stabilization

Excessive rent increases are driving people out of their homes and communities while increasing homelessness. Annual rent and fee increases should be limited to no more than 7% for existing tenants and manufactured homeowners. HB 1217 and SB 5222 provide stability and still allow landlords to make repairs, keep up with costs, and make a profit.

Capital funding for affordable homes

Washington needs almost 650,000 new homes affordable to low-income households over the next 20 years. The capital budget should include at least \$536 million for the Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve affordable homes.

These funds should be flexible and support: new affordable homes, both rental and homeownership; preservation of existing at-risk housing, including manufactured housing; and land acquisition.

Additional capital budget investments should be made to grow the nonprofit affordable housing repair fund created in the 2024 capital budget.

Prevent cuts to homelessness services, by investing \$253 million in the operating budget

To prevent cuts, the state must backfill the ongoing shortfall in funding for homeless services. At least \$253 million is needed to make up a shortfall caused by a lag in document recording revenue that funds homelessness services in every county. The operating budget should include at least this amount to prevent any reduction in homelessness services including shelter, emergency housing supports, youth and young adult services, and more.

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Protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness

A recent federal Supreme Court ruling makes it easier for local governments to fine, arrest, and otherwise punish people for surviving outdoors, even if there is no adequate shelter available. HB 1380 would prevent local governments from implementing and enforcing local laws that punish people experiencing homelessness.

Right to counsel

Nearly all landlords have an attorney representing them in eviction court. In 2021 the legislature passed a law that provides a lawyer for low-income tenants in eviction court, to help tenants navigate the complex and overwhelming process. As evictions increase across the state, the operating budget should increase funding for this program. The state should invest \$3.9 million in state fiscal year 2026 and \$4.9 million in state fiscal year 2027 to add capacity to the Right to Counsel program.

Progressive revenue

Washington is facing an enormous deficit for the upcoming budget cycle. To ensure we have the resources needed to invest in the basic services and infrastructure we all rely on, lawmakers should adopt new progressive revenue sources. This will help address the state's structural deficit and make our tax system more equitable by taxing those who can afford to pay more.