Microsoft

Microsoft's commitment to addressing affordable housing in the Puget Sound region

The Need

The Seattle region is continuing to experience a growing housing affordability crisis, where demand for low and middle-income housing continues to outstrip supply. It's a long-term challenge, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, and one that disproportionately impacts communities of color.

> "This is more than a home, it's a community. And there needs to be room for all of us."
>
> —Jane Broom
> Senior Director, Microsoft Philanthropies

Our Approach

In 2019, Microsoft launched an affordable housing commitment that currently stands at $750 million, focused on advancing affordable housing solutions in the Puget Sound region through targeted investment of loans and grants. We continue to engage with jurisdictions, housing developers and finance agencies to determine the best opportunities for accelerating the construction of more affordable housing in the region.

Examples of investments to date, include:

Washington State Housing Finance Commission: $250 million line of credit to the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC) (could create up to 3,000 more affordable housing units over the next decade).

Evergreen Housing Impact Fund: $50 million investment for low-income housing on the Eastside (will create approximately 1,250 estimated units).

King County Housing Authority: $60 million loan at below-market rates to finance acquisition of five middle-income residential apartment complexes in Kirkland, Bellevue, and Federal Way (will create approximately 1,029 units).

Innovative Financing

Microsoft's approach goes beyond simply writing a check. A common barrier to creating affordable housing is the ability to quickly secure financing for the period between project construction and completion. A similar challenge relates to extending borrowing capacity for partners who are working to preserve and grow our region's supply of affordable housing. Microsoft is piloting creative financing programs that accomplish both goals, providing partners with much-needed capital to move their projects forward.

Smart Policy

Addressing the affordable housing crisis will take more than just money – our community must also adopt critical housing policy measures to truly make a difference. We applaud leaders from the cities in our region who are enacting housing reforms such as reducing parking requirements, expanding affordability, and increasing density near transit.

Community Support

We all need to work together as a community to make progress. We believe that every individual and every business, large and small, has a responsibility to contribute however they can. That's because ultimately, a healthy business needs to be part of a healthy community, and a healthy community must have housing that is within the economic reach of everyone.

Looking Ahead

We continue to listen to, learn from and work with our public and private partners on the front lines of our region's housing crisis. Together, we are working to turn the vision of affordable housing into reality across the Puget Sound region.