

The Need for a Housing Research Center in Washington

The cost of housing is a critical issue for communities across Washington state, disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and people of color residents. Public opinion surveys consistently report housing affordability as a top priority for the public. Comprehensive data and research would help guide the state Legislature and local governments as they grapple with addressing housing and affordability needs.

Proposed Mission

The mission of the Washington State housing research center is to provide timely analysis and data-driven research to formulate bold strategies supporting programmatic innovation for policymakers, practitioners and advocates.

The Center aims to provide actionable, pragmatic paths that can bring together a coalition to urgently and equitably address housing affordability by providing homes for all in vibrant sustainable communities.

Potential Areas of Research

- Expanding access to quality homes and communities to support racial, social and economic inclusion
- Increasing the supply and lowering the cost of housing in ways that align with equity and environmental goals
- Driving innovation in housing policy and practice
- Analysis that supports efforts to maximize housing production around planned transit investments while addressing displacement

Has This Been Done Before?

Yes. Housing research centers such as the [Turner Center for Housing Innovation](#) at UC Berkeley and the [Furman Center](#) at NYU provide great models for what we could learn from and replicate in Washington state.

Is Another Organization Doing This Work Already?

No. Washington state does not have a permanent housing research center to inform the public and policymakers. Today, advocacy groups, non-profits and government entities (including University of Washington, the Department of Commerce, PSRC and Washington State Finance Commission) produce some research or analysis—but not in a comprehensive way. Each agency has limitations, and no single organization is dedicated fully to producing statewide housing research.

The Evans School of Public Policy and Governance and the College of Built Environments at University of Washington plan to partner to host the interdisciplinary housing research center that will draw on expertise of faculty and students across the university.

Budget Request

\$1.5 million in ongoing funding per biennium.

Why is Public Investment Important?

A substantial public investment in the housing research center is critical to drive innovation and ensure research and proposed strategies are perceived as fair and unbiased. Private and philanthropic investment will be pursued to supplement the public investment to create a public-private partnership.



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Puget Sound Regional Council



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