



## Overview

### What is housing innovation?

Housing innovation refers to “new or improved approaches to the housing production process that promote housing affordability and new housing choices.”<sup>1</sup> According to the “Housing Framework for Equity and Growth,” the housing production process includes three interrelated pathways of influence.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Market forces:** supply, demand, costs
2. **Public policy, services and regulations:** land use, processes, programs
3. **Community dynamics:** community input, infrastructure, schools

### What is an issue profile?

Issue profiles briefly explore an issue by summarizing key background information and introducing potential solutions. Several recent community assessments identified housing as a priority issue for Spokane County. In November 2023, a group of 28 community partners convened to collectively build knowledge about housing innovation in Spokane County. This document shares the results and can be used to develop improvement strategies.

### Why is housing innovation a priority issue in Spokane County?

Since 2021, at least four community assessments identified housing as an issue in Spokane County.

Assessment and Sponsor	Assessment Findings
<b>2021-2022 Spokane County Community Health Needs Assessment<sup>3</sup></b> <i>MultiCare, Providence, Spokane Regional Health District</i>	High housing cost burden and homelessness were voted into the top four priorities.  “In 2019, nearly half of renters (44.6%) and a third (26.8%) of homeowners with a mortgage in Spokane County were paying more than 30% of their household income on housing; spending more than 30% of household income on housing is financially burdensome.”
<b>2022-2024 Community Needs Assessment<sup>4</sup></b> <i>Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners</i>	“20.2% of all respondents, and 20% of respondents identifying as BIPOC, desired affordable housing to rent. 13.84% of all respondents, and 21% of respondents identifying as BIPOC, desired affordable homes to purchase.”
<b>2022 Community Health Needs Assessment<sup>5</sup></b> <i>Kaiser Permanente Washington</i>	“As housing costs increase in the Puget Sound area, people are forced to move farther and farther away from where health and social services are located, causing the affordability crisis to trickle out even to smaller cities like Spokane — ‘a domino effect across our state.’”
<b>2023 Spokane County Needs Assessment<sup>6</sup></b> <i>Priority Spokane</i>	“Promote housing innovations such as shared equity housing, tiny homes, and co-operative living to address housing issues” was voted as one of the top four priorities for Spokane County after calculating more than 1,700 votes.  “The housing affordability index for first time home buyers in Spokane County in 2022 was 51 decreasing from 100.9 in 2017 (51=51% able to afford first time home buying).”



## Current Situation

Community partners explored current work, players, resources, and potential barriers during a series of rotating discussions. This section summarizes the information they found the most promising or impactful.

Question	Promising or Impactful Information
<b>Current work</b>	<p><i>Inside county:</i> development code changes for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), diversion (homelessness prevention by social services agencies), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) technical assistance projects in northeast Spokane, inpatient discharge planning that includes a housing plan, Medicaid utilization for housing, mixed-use properties (services and retail) near housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Tenants Union and tenant protections, transit-oriented development, zoning changes</p> <p><i>Outside county:</i> housing innovation knowledge hubs and policy labs, Microsoft and Amazon giving corporate money to support affordable housing</p>
<b>Community support</b>	Architects, City of Spokane Community, Housing, and Human Services (CHHS), educational institutions, Haystack Heights Cohousing, homebuilders, homeless service providers, landlords, municipalities, social services agencies, Spokane Housing Authority, tax credit investors and syndicators, tech companies, Tenants Union, trades and specialists, tribal agencies
<b>Available resources</b>	Architects and designers providing trauma-informed design, community voices, dedicated housing departments, grants.gov, groups organizing to find solutions, higher education research and future professionals, public investment in housing, public-private partnerships, SET and other state energy programs to help finance related systems for housing, shared equity housing
<b>Potential barriers</b>	Complexity, cost, elected officials not agreeing on resources, lack of access or influence for community members, lack of engagement with rural communities, lack of historical knowledge, lack of incubators for housing innovation, no central place to find opportunities to engage with systems, not in my backyard (NIMBY-ism), overwork of nonprofit workers, political pressure, private sector buy-in, red tape requirements, redlining, stigma, turnover at social services agencies, utilities and infrastructure, zoning

## Strategic Collaboration

Community partners identified opportunities for strategic collaboration and alignment across sectors by completing a survey about their organizations. This section shares the survey results.

### What values do community partners share?

Eight values appeared in more than two community partner profiles. Strategies to increase housing innovation may be more successful with these values built into collaborations and projects.

- Racial and health equity
- Innovation
- Housing for all
- Diversity and inclusion
- Partnership and collaboration
- Stewardship
- Accountability
- Integrity

## What resources might partners be able to contribute?

Community partners most frequently selected staff time and skills as resources they might be able to contribute. Resources with the fewest potential sources include child care for meetings and staff time for interpretation or translation. The table below shows how many community partners may be able to provide each resource.

Resource	#	Resource	#
Funding to support community engagement	2	Staff time to support interpretation and translation	1
Food for community meetings	2	Staff time to support community engagement	9
Child care for community meetings	1	Lending interpretation equipment for meetings	2
Policy/advocacy skills	9	Staff time to support relationship building between CHI staff and other organizations	11
Media connections	3	Staff time to participate in CHI meetings/activities	9
Social media capacities	5	Staff time to help plan CHI meetings/activities	6
Physical space to hold meetings	5	Staff time to help facilitate CHI meetings/activities	5
Technology to support virtual meetings	5	Staff time to help implement strategies	10
Coordination with Tribal government	3	Staff time to transcribe meeting notes/recordings	3

Community partners wrote in additional resources they may be able to provide, including data, information about funding updates, information about housing resources at the statewide level, event sponsorships, staff time to provide technical assistance and information about housing and health intersection efforts in Washington state and nationwide, and staff time to develop training materials.

## What initial thoughts do community partners have about goals or strategies?

Four major themes appeared in community partners’ initial thoughts about goals and strategies for increasing housing innovation. They feel goals and strategies should increase resources, maximize the use of resources, improve collaborations, and engage different parts of the community. Comments are summarized below.

Themes	Initial Thoughts
Increase funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase funding</li> <li>• Leverage Medicaid</li> <li>• Open federal and state funds by focusing on climate, energy and decarbonization</li> <li>• Collaborate with energy non-governmental organizations to fund capital projects</li> </ul>
Maximize resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase resources</li> <li>• Improve coordination and cohesiveness to maximize available resources</li> <li>• Mitigate costs</li> </ul>
Improve collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce collaborative issues</li> <li>• Improve coordination and cohesiveness to maximize available resources</li> <li>• Include all levels of government</li> </ul>

Engage the community, centering people usually left out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community</li> <li>Reach out to BIPOC community</li> <li>Work with low-income households, older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and single-parent families</li> <li>Include rural areas of the county</li> </ul>
Learn by example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn from past efforts by connecting with people who have been in the profession locally long-term</li> <li>Think outside of the box and look outside of the county for examples</li> </ul>
Protect renters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve housing and keep tenants in the homes they are in</li> <li>Stabilize rent</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish agreed-upon language</li> <li>Subvert barriers</li> <li>Use state policy if needed</li> <li>Improve processes and outcomes at local organizations</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

A task force will convene in 2024 to increase housing innovation in Spokane County through long-term, upstream changes. The group will develop community health improvement strategies, address root causes of inequity and social determinants of health, and use strategic partnerships for sustainable impact. Their plans will be published in a community health improvement plan (CHIP) in late 2024.

To request the full data set, contact the Spokane Regional Health District Data Center at [datacenter@srhd.org](mailto:datacenter@srhd.org).

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### Other Attendees

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## References

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