



AHC's Statement on City of Tacoma Initiative 1: "SAFE Homes for All"

The Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium (AHC) supports affordable housing and tenant protections. Our 85+ members build and operate over 7,500 units of affordable housing across Pierce County so that our residents can have safe, stable places to call home.

AHC is concerned that additional costs and requirements under Initiative 1 will make it more difficult for affordable housing providers to build new homes, preserve the homes we already have, and serve the people who depend on them. Because the initiative would also regulate those who contribute to affordable housing, Tacoma residents should understand how these new requirements will negatively impact an already fragile part of our housing ecosystem.

AHC and the affordable housing providers we have spoken with were not meaningfully engaged by the authors of the initiative when developing these policies. That matters because policies affecting affordable housing should consider how these homes are funded, operated, maintained, and regulated.

That lack of input is particularly concerning because Initiative 1 applies broadly to rental housing, but it will not affect every housing provider the same way. Affordable housing operates under a unique set of funding, regulatory, and operating requirements that makes it increasingly difficult to build and maintain.

Providers must follow rules governing who qualifies for housing, how much rent they can charge, how they maintain properties, how they spend public funds, and how long homes must remain affordable. They are also subject to regular inspections, audits, reporting, and ongoing compliance monitoring by public and private funders.

These regulatory requirements exist alongside growing financial pressures. The cost of providing affordable housing continues to rise. Insurance, utilities, maintenance, staffing, and services are becoming more expensive, while affordable housing providers operate with restricted rents and limited resources.

Initiative 1 would add new fees, administrative requirements, and compliance responsibilities to that system. When costs rise, affordable housing providers cannot simply raise rents. It comes at a trade-off. Additional costs and requirements will affect providers' ability to build new affordable homes, maintain the homes we already have, and provide services to keep families housed.

AHC believes that Tacoma needs tenant protections and more affordable housing, but housing policy should account for both. Initiative 1 will complicate the development and preservation of housing across the full continuum. When contemplating its passage, Tacoma residents should carefully consider the consequences for Tacoma's affordable housing system and the impact on those who rely on it.