



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan Secures \$90 Million In State Budget For Buffalo Housing Priorities

SEAN M. RYAN April 20, 2024

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Historic Investment Will Support Construction of Infill Housing in Buffalo and Other Major Upstate Cities, Create Program to Fund Upstate Rental Property Improvements, Boost Access to Eviction Prevention Funds

ALBANY, NY – Today, April 20, 2024, New York State Senator Sean Ryan announced that he has secured \$80 million in the FY 2024-2025 state budget to fund two new, proof-of-concept pilot programs based upon “The City of Good Neighborhoods,” Senator Ryan’s housing plan

to add safe and affordable homes to the market in Buffalo and other cities throughout Upstate New York. An additional \$10 million has been secured to help renters outside of New York City access emergency rental funds.

The first of the pilot programs will allocate \$40 million to New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to construct affordable one- and two-family homes in Buffalo, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Binghamton. The funding will cover construction costs and subsidize the sale of the new homes to low-to-moderate income New Yorkers across Upstate New York. Senator Ryan devised this infill housing program to revitalize neighborhoods while also making homeownership attainable to people with a steady income who have nonetheless been pushed out of the housing market by rising costs.

Senator Ryan originally proposed creating an infill program as a solution to the City of Buffalo's lack of affordable housing and persistent revenue shortages, but it was quickly identified by the Senate as a program that could help other upstate cities as well. The plan is specifically designed to promote long-term stability for municipalities by adding new houses to the tax base instead of abating property taxes, as construction incentive programs often do.

Another \$40 million will be used to create a program that will add more affordable, high-quality units to the rental market across the state. The second pilot program, also part of Senator Ryan's housing plan, will allow small landlords throughout Upstate New York to apply for grants to help them make major improvements to their rental properties. In exchange for the grants, the landlords will be required to rent the rehabilitated units at an affordable rate determined by HCR for 10 years.

Establishing the infill and rental improvement programs as pilot programs with dedicated funding will allow the state to set them up and identify how to administer them most

effectively. Once the programs are up and running, the state will have the ability to scale them up in order to meet their potential to create thousands of new housing units in Buffalo and across the state.

The budget also includes a new allocation of \$10 million to help counties outside of New York City assist households that are facing eviction. These emergency rental prevention funds will prevent renters from being evicted due to unforeseen financial challenges. They will help keep people housed, get delinquent rents paid to landlords, and relieve pressure on an overburdened shelter system. The money, administered by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, will be distributed based on the rate of eviction filings and community need.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “Most of the coverage of our state’s housing crisis focuses on New York City’s challenges, but the truth is that affordable housing shortages are a statewide problem. Earlier this year, I announced a comprehensive plan to address some of the most pressing housing issues facing cities like Buffalo. In the months since, I have worked tirelessly with my colleagues to make sure upstate cities had a voice in budget negotiations, and that hard work has paid off – this year’s state budget is addressing our housing issues head on.

“I am proud to announce that the budget will include millions of dollars of state funding to implement pilot programs pulled directly from my housing plan. This significant investment in upstate housing will allow us to build more homes, get more rental units onto the market, and prevent families from being evicted in cities across the state. Taken together, these investments represent a major step forward to address the housing crisis facing our region and our state as a whole.”

Niagara District Councilmember David A. Rivera said, “Of all the issues faced by City of Buffalo residents, affordable housing is, almost certainly, the most pressing. We are so grateful to Senator Sean Ryan and the State for committing to this endeavor that will change the lives of so many for generations to come.”

University District Councilmember Rasheed N.C. Wyatt said, “I am grateful to Senator Ryan for pushing forward and making this initiative a reality. It is going to be extremely helpful for residents of the East Side and throughout the rest of Buffalo.”

Jocelyn Gordon, Executive Director of the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation, said, “We at BENLIC applaud New York State’s continued commitment to affordable housing, especially in Western New York, which we know is saddled with some of the oldest and most dilapidated housing stock in the country. Building age, energy inefficiency, and skyrocketing building costs contribute to neighborhood disinvestment. Senator Ryan’s new housing initiatives for homebuyers will help to restore the fabric of our communities.”

Christopher Kennedy, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Buffalo, said, “The potential impact of Senator Ryan’s initiative on Buffalo’s housing cannot be overstated. His efforts to close the gap in affordable home ownership opportunities align powerfully with our vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. His commitment to affordable housing is crucial for Buffalo families aspiring to own homes and build generational wealth. We are thrilled to align with Senator Ryan as he shares Habitat’s vision for community transformation.”

Vienna Laurendi, 2024 President of Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors, said, “Senator Ryan leads the way in making sure the upstate housing market rebounds. His tireless efforts and compassion for western New Yorkers is limitless. The Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors thanks him for his support of our community.”