



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

State Legislators Announce Major Investments In Housing For Buffalo And Other Upstate Cities

SEAN M. RYAN April 23, 2024

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Historic Investments Include Support for Construction of Infill Housing, Program to Improve Rental Properties, New Eviction Prevention Funds

BUFFALO – Today, April 23, 2024, members of the New York State legislature and Buffalo Common Council joined housing advocates and other community stakeholders to announce details of the FY 2024-2025 state budget. The budget takes significant steps to address the state’s affordable housing crisis, including several interventions designed for Buffalo and

cities like it across Upstate New York.

The legislature secured \$80 million to create two pilot housing programs conceived specifically by Senator Sean Ryan to address Buffalo's housing challenges. The first 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.

Another \$40 million will be used to create a pilot program that 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.

The budget includes a new allocation of \$10 million for emergency rental prevention funds to help counties outside of New York City assist households that are facing eviction. These funds 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.

In total, the budget invests hundreds of millions of dollars in creating and maintaining affordable housing across New York. Other line items that will have a significant impact on upstate cities include \$75 million for capital improvements of upstate public housing authorities and \$50 million for land banks to redevelop blighted or abandoned properties.

The budget also strengthens protections for homeowners against deed theft. It creates a clear definition of the crime in the larceny statute, and limits the ability of predatory

investors to acquire interests in inherited property and to pressure homeowners into selling their family homes.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “New York has struggled for years to come up with a comprehensive housing policy that would meaningfully address the housing affordability crisis facing every part of the state. In the past, most of the conversation has been focused on New York City’s challenges, but we know that affordable housing shortages are a statewide problem. With this year’s budget appropriations and a number of creative policy interventions, we have finally acknowledged that regional challenges require regional solutions and started New York down a path toward solving this problem.”

Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera said, “Here in Buffalo, we need to create Upstate solutions to Upstate problems, and housing is no exception. Renters and new home buyers must navigate a housing market in Western New York where the houses are full of lead, not properly weatherized for our city’s winters, and often in urgent need of repairs. I was proud to vote for a state budget that includes significant investments to help the City of Good Neighbors better match the housing needs of our population growth. The funding announced today will do so in a way that is equitable and will make home ownership for Buffalonians less of a pipedream and more of a possibility.”

Assemblymember Monica Wallace said, “The housing crisis isn’t just limited to big cities like New York. That’s why we fought for funding to help address the challenges we face here in Western New York. From rental assistance to builder incentives, to programs helping landlords rehabilitate off-market rentals, this budget will help increase the housing supply and make housing more affordable in the Buffalo-Niagara region. I thank Governor Hochul for her focus on lowering housing costs, and I thank Senator Ryan for his leadership in keeping Upstate housing concerns a focus during the budget.”

Assemblymember Bill Conrad said, “My constituents have shared with me that they are concerned by the lack of stable, affordable housing across Western New York. Indeed, a safe, accessible home is the cornerstone of quality of life. Solving this problem will require a collaborative and innovative approach, and I applaud Sen. Ryan for taking the lead locally in crafting such an approach. I am also encouraged by this budget’s attention to our region’s housing crisis.”

Assemblymember Karen McMahon said, “As we tackle the housing crisis in New York State, I am pleased that Senator Ryan’s affordable housing initiatives were included in this year’s budget. Specifically, we allocated \$80 million for programs to build affordable one- and two-family homes and rehab existing rental units throughout upstate New York. These programs will add high quality and affordable rental units to the housing market and also enable low- to moderate-income New Yorkers to become homeowners. These investments demonstrate that New York State is committed to addressing the housing shortage with innovative and creative solutions.”

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.”

Masten District Councilmember Zeneta B. Everhart said, “As Council Woman for the Masten District, I affirm that housing in my district and across the City of Buffalo will always be a top priority. I want to extend my gratitude to our WNY delegation in the state legislature for

their efforts in securing additional funding for housing across New York State in the NYS budget. I also want to thank Governor Kathy Hochul for her commitment to Buffalo. I eagerly anticipate the implementation and rollout of this program that puts a focus on Buffalo's housing accessibility and affordability."

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."

Brandi J Barrett, Principal of Barrett & Benitez Development LLC, said, "As a generational homeowner, I am aware of the challenges disinvested neighborhoods have in trying to encourage young, black, educated professionals to stay or buy on the East Side of Buffalo. Creating neighborhoods that are desirable and not stigmatized by what we currently think of as 'affordable' or 'subsidy' housing is critical to attract and retain a healthy neighborhood."

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.”