



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

## Senator Sean Ryan Proposes New Housing Program For Seniors, Pushes For Expansion Of Programs Created Last Year

SEAN M. RYAN February 14, 2025

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Senator Sean Ryan unveils plans for A-PLUS program, Feb. 14, 2025

Senator Ryan Working to Build on Last Year's Budget Wins, Establish New Program to Help Low-Income Seniors Safely Age in Place

**BUFFALO** – Today, February 14, 2025, New York State Senator Sean Ryan announced he is continuing his advocacy for housing needs in Buffalo and other upstate communities by

pushing for the inclusion of \$320 million in the FY 2025-2026 state budget to expand three housing programs created in last year's budget and establish a fourth new program to support aging homeowners.

The proposed funding would be distributed among the four programs, all of which are part of *The City of Good Neighborhoods*, Senator Ryan's comprehensive plan to address the shortage of high-quality, affordable housing in Buffalo.

**Senator Sean Ryan** said, "I was proud to secure \$90 million in last year's budget to create three new programs to address New York's housing affordability crisis, but solving New York's housing issues is something that will require many years of significant, sustained investment. HCR's hard work to establish these pilot programs has provided the proof-of-concept we needed; now it's time to expand the programs so we can reach more New Yorkers.

"I've received a lot of good community feedback about my housing plan, but there is a common theme that keeps coming up: 'We need more support for current homeowners and low-income seniors.' That feedback has inspired the A-PLUS program, which will provide seniors with support that will allow them to stay in their homes and age in place."

### **Helping Seniors Age in Place**

Senator Ryan has requested \$100 million to establish Aging in Place for Upstate Seniors (A-PLUS), a grant/loan program for low-income, senior homeowners. A-PLUS was conceived as a companion program to the recently established Block by Block program that would support legacy homeowners in Buffalo, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Binghamton. It would create 80%/20% or 90%/10% grant/loan opportunities of up to \$150,000, allowing seniors to make necessary repairs to their properties, increase the energy efficiency of their homes, and improve their homes' accessibility to help them age in place safely and comfortably.

## **Improving Vacant Rental Units**

The **Vacant Rental Program (VRP)** offers small, local, and responsible landlords grants of \$50,000 or \$75,000 to renovate vacant units in exchange for a 10-year commitment to rent the units at affordable rates corresponding to each grant amount. VRP was established as a pilot program with \$40 million of funding in the FY 2024-2025 state budget. The interest in the program during the request-for-proposal process far exceeded the pilot program's funding, and **local organizations selected to administer the program across the state** are receiving more applications from eligible property owners than they can fulfill. As a result, Senator Ryan has proposed expanding the investment to \$100 million in the FY 2025-2026 budget and maintaining that funding every year for the next decade.

## **Creating Infill Housing**

Like VRP, the **Block by Block infill housing program** was proposed by Senator Ryan in January 2024, established as a \$40 million pilot program in the FY 2024-2025 state budget, and brought online by the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) later in 2024. This program supports small, concentrated, new construction infill projects of one and two-family homes on vacant lots 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 to increase homeownership opportunities while revitalizing underutilized blocks. Senator Ryan has proposed expanding the program to \$100 million in the FY 2025-2026 budget to expand the program's reach and account for potential construction cost increases caused by Donald Trump's "paused" tariffs on Canadian goods.

## **Preventing Evictions**

The **New York State Shelter Arrears Eviction Forestallment (SAEF) program** is the third part of Senator Ryan's housing plan to be created in last year's state budget. Through this new

program, a total of \$10 million will be distributed to New York's 57 counties outside of New York City and Long Island, with each county's allocation determined by its 2023 eviction rates. The program was designed to reach families in need of temporary rental assistance who are left behind by New York's existing Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF) and Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) programs. It was conceived based on the knowledge that it is easier, safer, cheaper, and more compassionate to keep someone housed than to try to find them alternate housing once they've lost their own. Senator Ryan has proposed expanding this program to \$20 million to keep more New Yorkers in their homes.

**Bruce Boissonnault, Volunteer Advocate, AARP New York**, said, "AARP thanks Senator Ryan for his leadership in proposing this common-sense affordable housing package. Older persons want affordable options and they want to age in their own homes or apartments and communities -- close to family and friends -- as long as possible. When we create more affordable housing options like those we are talking about today, it will keep older persons living in the communities they love and out of expensive taxpayer-funded nursing homes. New York needs solid housing policy for an ever-growing senior population in New York State, including right here in the Buffalo-Niagara Region. Senator Ryan's initiatives can help us achieve that goal."

**Karen Nicholson, CEO of Center for Elder Law & Justice**, said, "We applaud Senator Ryan for his housing program for seniors. Aging in place helps older adults keep their social networks, thereby reducing social isolation, a leading cause of health issues as people age. Aging in place enables our clients to keep their independence and staying in familiar surrounding as you age slows the advancement of memory loss. However, keeping seniors in their homes is good for society as well, where they can continue to contribute to their churches, neighborhoods, and families. Senator Ryan's housing proposal is good news for Buffalo, and we urge the Governor and the legislature to enact it as soon as possible."

Senator Ryan also kicked off an advocacy campaign to gather community support for this year's housing priorities. *I Love My Neighborhood, But My Neighborhood Needs Some Love* invites New Yorkers who support the programs described above to add a symbolic heart with their name on it to a mural. In the coming weeks, members of Senator Ryan's staff will be visiting community meetings throughout Buffalo to spread awareness for his housing priorities and help community members create their hearts. [Supporters can also submit their name and zip code online](#) to have a heart added to the mural on their behalf.