

Black Home Initiative (BHI)

Targeting the Racial Inequities at the Core of the Housing Ecosystem to Increase Homeownership Among Black Households.

Our Vision

All people live with dignity in safe, healthy and affordable homes within **communities of opportunity**



HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT
consortium

How Can We Create Change?

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A Collaborative Multi-Sectoral Approach

March 2021

HDC, the Coalition for More Housing Choices, and More Than 90 Partners Came Together To Explore What Would Be Needed to Create Change and Months of Workgroups Followed.

July 2021

Center for Community Investment Selected Civic Commons to convene a 3-year greater Seattle effort

October 2021

The [Black Homeownership 7-Point Plan](#) was the result of the many workgroups' efforts, and it was released at the Housing Washington Conference.

March 2022

Civic Commons launched [Black Home Initiative \(BHI\)](#) to implement the 7-Point Plan.

July 2022


Advocacy effort begins to create a policy enabling environment for the 7-Point Plan.

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The Black Homeownership 7-Point Plan



Increasing Black Homeownership in the Puget Sound Region

Initial Plan 2021 by Seven Focus Areas
BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP INITIATIVE



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The 7 Focus Areas



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1. MARKETING & OUTREACH:

To overcome many years of discriminatory practices and negative experiences attached to becoming homeowners, we need to create proactive approaches to marketing. This includes strategies to create coordinated systems for intake and deploying “trusted brokers” who interface with community and provide credibility, assurance, and encouragement to Black households who could potentially become homeowners.



2. PRE-/POST-PURCHASE COUNSELING:

Overcoming many barriers—including student loan debt, credit history and score, and limited information—dictates new strategies in pre-purchase counseling. Credit-building support and special efforts to encourage those previously denied a loan are essential. Post-purchase counseling can help even out the volatility of income and expenses.



3. PURCHASE SUPPORTS & TOOLS:

Strategies to create ample down payment assistance (DPA) programs scaled across various incomes are essential. The use of additional tools like homebuyer clubs to provide encouragement and debt remediation funds to help address debt incurred from life events are other examples of strategies in this focus area.

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4. CREDIT & LENDING:

Innovation strategies in mortgage credit scoring and mortgage products are necessary. Having underwriters that are context responsive is also key. We need systems to track and support those who are not immediately mortgage-ready so that we encourage potential buyers with “not yet” rather than “no” and provide trajectories to “yes”.



5. HOUSING PRODUCTION:

All the efforts around identifying and preparing buyers will be vulnerable to failure unless we find ways to increase the supply of affordable homes available for purchase. To overcome the challenges of a hot market we need new and expansive predevelopment and construction financing resources. We need intentional land identification and acquisition strategies and new partnerships between non- and for-profit developers. We also need to leverage different forms of conveyance using community land trusts, sweat equity models, and cooperatives, combined with multi-unit structures.

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6. POLICIES & PRACTICES:

This area includes policy changes and consumer protections at the federal, state, and local levels to overcome past discriminatory practices and pave the way for a focus on Black households. The reforms are wide-ranging in the areas of lending and real estate.



7. SUSTAINING EXISTING OWNERS:

Strategies to ensure existing homeowners retain ownership of their homes and equitably benefit from homeownership as a wealth-building tool. These strategies include foreclosure prevention, property tax reduction, home repair assistance, detached accessory dwelling units, and more, and are essential to the initiative's success.

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7-Point Plan Strategic Objectives

1. Marketing and Outreach	2. Pre-Purchase Counseling	3. Purchase Supports/Tools	4. Credit and Lending	5. Housing Production	6. Policies and Practices	7. Sustaining Existing Owners
<p>1A. Connect with the Black population including the diaspora to ascertain interest in homeownership and proactively share potential opportunities</p>	<p>2A. Develop new- and grow existing - comprehensive programs tailored for ready, near-ready and long-term-ready homebuyers</p>	<p>3A. Create an array of buyer readiness tools and resources to complement pre-purchase counseling programs</p>	<p>4A. Modify underwriting and lending practices to expand access to appropriate and affordable loans and address any systemic discrimination</p>	<p>5A. Build sector capacity to increase and sustain scaled delivery of homes</p>	<p>6A. Enact zoning and regulatory reform policies that meaningfully increase supply and access to affordable entry-level, and market-rate homes for first-time homebuyers</p>	<p>7A. Proactively make comprehensive post-purchase education, counseling, foreclosure prevention and repair resources widely and readily available</p> <p>7B. Ensure programs and services don't perpetuate or increase disparities</p>
	<p>2B. Expand program effectiveness through a network of partnerships among agencies, lenders and real estate agents that elevates homeownership as a process not an event</p>	<p>3B. Expand access to, and amount of, down payment assistance funding available</p>		<p>5B. Launch a comprehensive land identification, mapping, and acquisition initiative</p>	<p>6B. Substantially increase tools that capture land value through acquisition and assemblage to preserve affordability and stave off displacement</p>	
				<p>5C. Scale the production and sustain the inventory of a healthy mix of for-sale home types, sizes, and prices</p>	<p>6C. Coordinate efforts to address regulations and practices that unnecessarily impede development of, and prevent access to, homeownership opportunities</p>	
				<p>5D. Create new and significant predevelopment and construction capital</p>	<p>6D. Expand public grants that finance affordable home construction to create sustainable homeownership opportunities</p>	

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Implementing the 7-Point Plan

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Implementation

- BHI Has a Goal of **1,500 New First-Time Low-To-Moderate Income (LMI) Black Homeowners Within 5 Years**
- **Black Home Initiative (BHI)** Will Implement the Black Homeownership 7-Point Plan in South Seattle, South King County and Northern Pierce County
- HDC Will Lead the Advocacy Effort To Create the **Policy Enabling Environment** Needed To Achieve This Goal



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Policy Enabling Environment

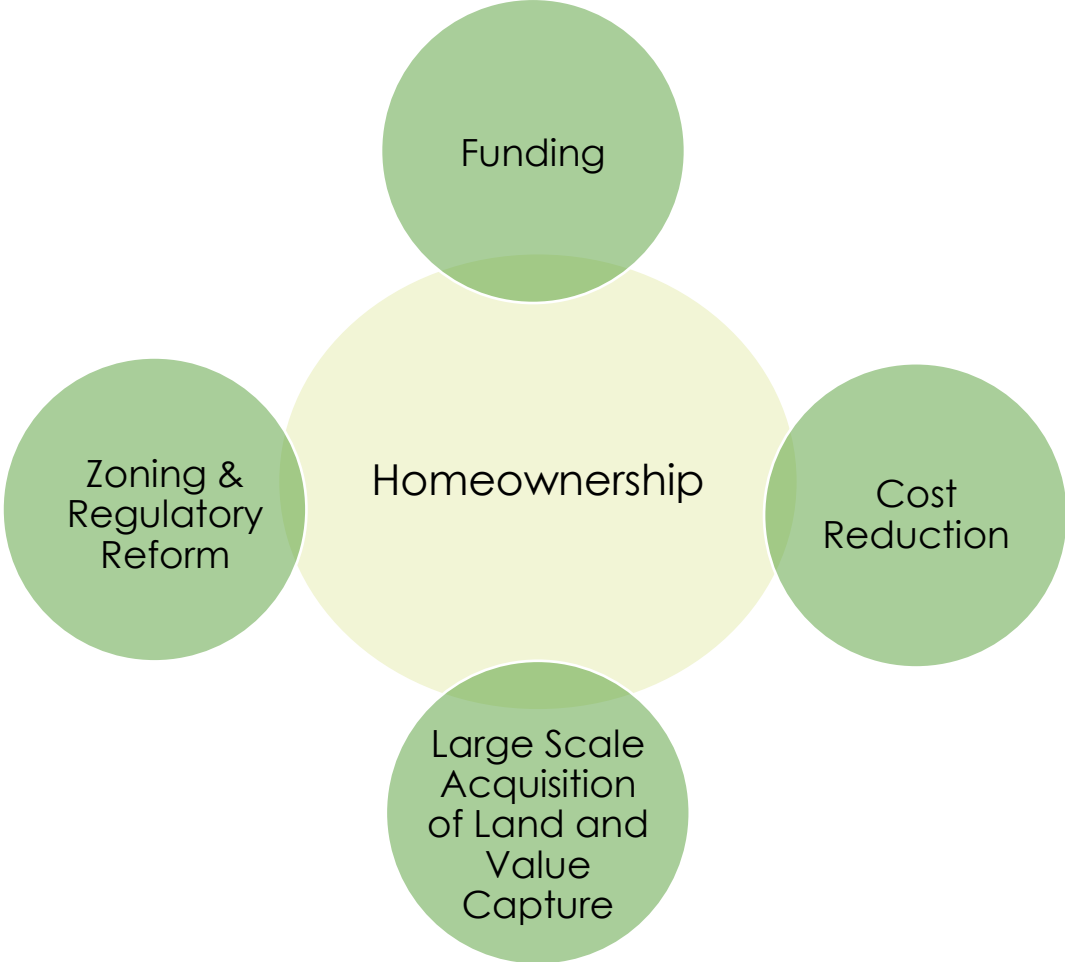
- Lead and Track BHI Advocacy by Community Leaders To Maximize Efforts
- Create a **Homeownership Policy Framework** To Address The Historic Inequities
- Convene a **BHI Policy Group** to Provide Input on the Homeownership Policy Framework
- Weave Together a **BHI Network** Made Up of People Invested in Realizing the BHI Work
- **Mobilize the BHI Network** to Ensure the Successful Implementation of the Black Homeownership 7-Point Plan Across the Puget Sound Region

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Homeownership Policy Framework



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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Tactics
 <p>Zoning & Regulatory Reform</p>	<p>Enact policies that meaningfully increase supply and access to affordable entry-level and market-rate homes for first-time homebuyers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass a Statewide Middle Housing bill (2023) to add middle housing near transit and in current neighborhood residential zones. To support Middle Housing construction dramatically reduce minimum lot sizes or waive them altogether to encourage subdivision of lots. Change side yard setbacks and consider zero lot line setbacks. Push for fee-simple ownership of ADUs and DADUs and townhomes. Advocate for anti-displacement homeownership solutions to be considered. • Consider further Statewide Condo Liability Reform • Enact Seattle Comprehensive Plan updates (2024) that increase density in current neighborhood residential zones. Push for condo and coop ownership opportunities within existing and future multi-family housing. Offer incentives such as increased allowable density, height, or floor-area-ratio (FAR) for permanently affordable homeownership units. Prioritize direct assistance to people in redlined vulnerable-to-gentrification neighborhoods and target first-generation homeowners. • Support Seattle Equitable Development Zoning Pilot, part of Equitable Development Initiative, to identify and support projects that have encountered barriers in the City's land use and zoning policies.

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Tactics
 <p>Large Scale Acquisition of Land and Value Capture</p>	<p>Substantially increase tools that capture land value through acquisition and assemblage to preserve affordability and stave off displacement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact the State Housing Benefit Districts legislation and specify homeownership minimum thresholds with AMI targets. Push for condo and coop ownership opportunities within existing and future multi-family housing. • Support a State Bill to utilize “Surplus and Underutilized Land” and “Faith-Based” Land for affordable homeownership units. Support similar action happening in Tacoma-specific work. • Utilize, support, and encourage strategies laid out in the Homeownership Disparities Workgroup Report “Improving Homeownership Rates for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Washington”. Support similar actions happening in Tacoma-specific work through their Tacoma Housing Disparity Study. • Support a King County Community Preference Policy anti-displacement tool to create affordable homeownership opportunities. Support similar action happening in Tacoma-specific work.

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Tactics
 <p>Cost Reduction</p>	<p>Coordinate efforts to address regulations and practices that unnecessarily add costs that impede development of, and prevent access to, homeownership opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a State Anti-Displacement Property Tax Exemption which would apply to the state property tax levy and may exempt up to the first \$250,000 assessed value of qualified residential property • Revise thresholds for the Seattle Full Design Review process or eliminate Seattle Design Review process for affordable housing. This effort is specific to larger multi-family affordable homeownership opportunities. • Adopt a State Tenants Opportunity to Purchase Act combined with financing and technical support. • At a State and Local level, streamline and enforce a Permitting Process Time Limit and Fee Reexamination to address housing production obstructionism generally, and affordable homeownership specifically.

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Tactics
 <p>Funding</p>	<p>Expand public grants that finance affordable home construction to create sustainable homeownership opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for the State Housing Trust Fund at a historically high level and establish a permanent funding source (REET being explored). • Remove State Housing Trust Fund award size caps and per home limits for affordable homeownership projects. • Expand the total amount of direct assistance available for Down Payment Assistance through the State Housing Trust Fund. • Change the State Housing Trust Fund language to specify limited equity cooperative eligibility and include shared ownership and share loans as eligible for down payment assistance and other resources. • Support a State Covenants Re-Investment Act that would support homeownership for those affected by discriminatory covenants. • Support the demand for King County to increase funding for affordable homeownership in South King County and establish a long-term sustainable funding source, as well as track new affordable homeownership units in the Regional Affordable Housing Dashboard. • Increase public subsidy at the local jurisdictional level to support the development of affordable homeownership through the Seattle Housing Levy Renewal.

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Tactics
 <p>Funding</p>	<p>Expand public grants that finance affordable home construction to create sustainable homeownership opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for State funded land acquisition for permanently affordable homeownership units. Commerce Homeownership Disparities Report should have recommendations. • Build the capacity of nonprofit sector organizations to scale Black homeownership opportunities. Commerce Homeownership Disparities Report should have recommendations. • Leverage existing, and suggest new, Commerce Home Repair Loan and Weatherization Programs to sustain affordable homeownership opportunities. • Explore Vacancy Taxes on underutilized land and/or vacant homes and Rental Income Taxes for rental conglomerates.

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It will take all of us.
Be a part of the BHI Network!

Contact bambi@housingconsortium.org to take your next advocacy step.

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