

2025 City Legislative Priorities

Cities and towns are home to 65% of Washington's residents, drive the state's economy, and provide the most accessible form of government. The success of our cities and towns depends on adequate resources and community-based decision-making to best meet the unique needs of our communities.

Washington's 281 cities and towns ask the Legislature to partner with us and act on the following priorities:



Fiscal sustainability

Revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap that has been in place for more than 20 years. Adopt a new cap tied to inflation and population growth factors, with a limit not to exceed 3%. This will allow local elected officials the option to adjust the local property tax rate to better serve our communities and keep up with the costs of providing basic services like police, fire, streets, and valued community amenities like parks.



Behavioral health treatment capacity

Expand funding for grants to establish and support ongoing funding for local behavioral health crisis co-responder programs. Support additional training and certification, and workforce development for co-responders. Seek increased investments in community behavioral health treatment funding – both capital start-up and operational expenses. Support continued expansion of continuum of treatment capacity, from crisis stabilization to inpatient to outpatient and continued expansion of forensic behavioral health treatment capacity. Provide additional mental health support for students.



Housing supply

Dedicate current funding and explore new funding options, such as the real estate transfer tax, to address needs across the housing continuum, including home ownership, senior, workforce, affordable, and permanent supportive housing. Ensure that funding availability extends to all communities with needs, including small and medium-sized cities and towns in both eastern and western Washington.



Public safety

Provide more resources and tools to cities and towns to address public safety and criminal justice challenges. Help cities hire new officers by covering 100% of the cost of attending the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA), and continue to expand existing—and create new—regional BLEA academies. Increase support for public safety and the overall criminal justice system with additional funding for the Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account, as well as enhanced local funding tools like the public safety sales tax. Increase programs to reduce juvenile crime and provide more juvenile behavioral health treatment and correctional capacity. Continue to support our officers and other first responders with wellness and injury prevention programs.



Infrastructure investment

Protect and expand direct and meaningful investments in traditional local infrastructure for needed expansion and ongoing operations and maintenance of aging systems, including expanded and reliable funding for the crucial Public Works Assistance Account. Support sustainable state transportation revenue that includes funding for local preservation, maintenance, and operations. Develop new fiscal tools to build infrastructure to support housing development and growth, including increased funding for the Connecting Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). Expand cities' ability and flexibility to use the real estate excise tax (REET) for additional capital needs, including maintenance as well as to support affordable housing.

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