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Shapiro Administration Highlights Need to Build More Housing, Reduce Costs, and Create Opportunity for Every Pennsylvanian During Tour of Downtown Reading

Last month, Governor Josh Shapiro unveiled the Commonwealth's first-ever [Housing Action Plan](#) — delivering commonsense solutions to everyday problems and ensuring every Pennsylvanian has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Governor Shapiro's proposed 2026-27 budget calls for a \$1 billion investment in housing and critical infrastructure to accelerate the construction of new homes across Pennsylvania and provide critical rehabilitation funding to preserve existing homes.



Reading, PA – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Rick Siger** joined local leaders to tour housing development projects in downtown Reading, highlighting the urgent need to expand housing opportunity and increase affordability for all Pennsylvanians.

Under current projections, Pennsylvania will face a shortage of roughly 185,000 homes by 2035 without further action. Housing costs continue to rise at a rate faster than wages, with over one million households in Pennsylvania spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, and more than 50 percent of the Commonwealth's housing stock is over 50 years old — making it increasingly more expensive to maintain.

To address these issues, **Governor Josh Shapiro** created Pennsylvania's [first-ever Housing Action Plan](#), which will build and preserve more homes, modernize housing regulations and zoning rules, and break down barriers preventing people from finding stable housing — all to grow the Commonwealth's economy and improve Pennsylvanians' quality of life.

“The exciting projects we toured today in Reading are an outstanding example of government, private industry, and the non-profit sectors working together to bring more housing to the market,” said Secretary Siger. “Governor Shapiro created Pennsylvania's Housing Action Plan to align state and local leaders, builders, advocates, and communities around a shared vision —

building and preserving more homes, stabilizing housing outcomes, and expanding housing opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.”

Secretary Siger was joined by Reading Mayor Eddie Morán, Senator Judy Schwank, Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, and other leaders to tour two housing development projects at the 400 Block of Penn Street and Buttonwood Gateway.

- The 400 block of Penn Street is a proposed \$52 million redevelopment of the former Farmers National Bank Building and adjacent Callowhill building into a major mixed-use complex. A five-story in-fill building would be added, creating a total of 150 residential units. The City of Reading is partnering with Shuman Development Group on the project and will need to utilize a variety of funding sources to complete construction. The Commonwealth has invested \$602,462 in improvements to Penn Street over the last five years.
- Buttonwood Gateway is a large-scale revitalization and affordable housing project in Northwest Reading that has transformed a long-blighted industrial area into a sustainable residential community. The project has been a collaboration between the Reading Redevelopment Authority, Habitat for Humanity of Berks County, and private developers. The Commonwealth has invested \$536,250 through the Neighborhood Assistance Program to help construct homes in the neighborhood over the last five years.

“Reading shows what’s possible when state and local government, nonprofits, and private developers work together,” said **Mayor Eddie Morán**. “We’re turning long-empty buildings and blighted areas into places people are proud to call home. The Housing Action Plan gives us the tools to build more housing, protect our historic neighborhoods, and make it easier for working families to find safe, affordable homes.”

“The rising cost of housing is top of mind for young families, working professionals, seniors and everyone in between. Berks County is an example of a community that requires a wide range of housing options to adequately meet the needs of its residents,” said **Senator Judy Schwank**. “Investing in our aging housing stock and making it easier to build new homes are both necessary to bridge Pennsylvania’s housing gap. Governor Shapiro’s Housing Action Plan seeks to make strategic, long-term investments to ensure we have the housing needed to meet the needs of Pennsylvanians in all 67 counties.”

“The Governor’s Housing Action Plan is an investment in our communities and our future. By expanding housing access, this plan will make it easier for people to move to communities like Reading and have a house they are proud to call a home,” said **Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz**. “I look forward to working with Governor Shapiro and Secretary Siger on developing this plan and seeing the positive impact it will have in Berks County.”

“Shuman Development Group started redeveloping properties in Downtown Reading in 1994 and in 2008 did a comprehensive study of cities all along the eastern half of the Country, from Mobile, Alabama all the way up to Buffalo, New York. What we determined was that no other city on the East Coast could match the upside potential of properly done investments in the City of Reading,” said **Broker of Record and President of Shuman Development Group Alan Shuman**. “We see the momentum starting to grow and continue to make those investments we began 25 years ago.”

“Safe, affordable housing is the foundation upon which strong families and vibrant neighborhoods are built, and Governor Shapiro’s Housing Action Plan represents an important step toward addressing the challenges our communities face,” said **Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Berks County Timothy J. Daley**. “Real progress happens when public leaders, nonprofit organizations, and private partners work together with a shared commitment to opportunity and stability. We are honored to help showcase this collaborative approach in Reading and to demonstrate through the tour how these partnerships are creating real, lasting change for local families.”

The Governor’s Housing Action Plan was spearheaded by an executive committee of cabinet officials and senior leaders from DCED, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Governor’s Office of Policy and Planning, Legislative Affairs, and Budget Office; and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

For over a year, the Shapiro Administration engaged thousands of residents, local leaders, developers, and housing advocates from every corner of the Commonwealth:

- Hosting 18 Regional Roundtables with Pennsylvanians in each of the Commonwealth’s five regions.
- Attending Statewide Housing Conferences to receive feedback from housing developers, property managers, and other professional attendees.
- Conducting Statewide Surveys which collected nearly 2,500 survey responses from each of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties.

The Governor’s Housing Action Plan lays out five core goals:

- **Build and Preserve Pennsylvania’s Housing Stock.** Pennsylvania needs more homes for today and tomorrow, but we must also protect the ones that have long anchored our neighborhoods. By building new houses at a pace that keeps up with our economy and safeguarding the homes we already have, we can ensure that safe, stable, and affordable housing is available to residents for generations to come.
- **Expand Housing Opportunity for All Pennsylvanians.** A dignified, secure home should never be out of reach. By breaking down barriers, expanding homeownership opportunities, and strengthening tenant protections, we can build a Commonwealth where every resident has the security of a safe, stable, and attainable home.
- **Provide Pathways to Housing Stabilization and Sustainability.** A strong system supports those residents who are most vulnerable. By connecting Pennsylvanians to resources that prevent displacement and by supporting households during times of crisis, we can reduce housing insecurity – giving our residents the stability they need to grow and our communities the resiliency they need to thrive.
- **Modernize Pennsylvania’s Housing Development Regulation.** Outdated rules and unnecessary delays drive up costs and slow down progress. By modernizing regulations, cutting red tape, and streamlining development, we can make it easier and more affordable to build homes across the Commonwealth – encouraging investment and helping to ensure that housing is developed where it is needed most.
- **Improve coordination and accountability.** Pennsylvania’s housing systems work best when they work together. By aligning local and state efforts, sharing data, and coordinating across agencies, we can deliver results efficiently and stay accountable to the residents we serve.

Governor Shapiro's [2026-27 Proposed Budget](#) takes the first steps to implement this plan, calling for investments and reforms to expand housing access, protect renters and homeowners, and strengthen coordination across state agencies to further strengthen his [Housing Action Plan](#). The Governor's budget proposal includes:

- **Critical Infrastructure Investment Fund to Build More Homes:** One of the best ways to lower the cost of housing is to build more homes. The Governor's budget proposal creates a new \$1 billion initiative supported through the issuance of general obligation bonds, with proceeds deposited into the Capital Facilities Fund. This initiative would provide flexible funding for major infrastructure projects across the Commonwealth, including building and preserving more housing, bringing new energy generation onto the grid, and upgrading school and municipal facilities.
- **Protecting Renters and Promoting Housing Stability:** Establishes a statewide cap on rental application fees tied to the actual cost of screening and prohibits fees before a property is viewed; affirms a tenant's right to terminate a lease due to domestic violence without financial penalty; seals eviction records for individuals who were not actually evicted; and advances fair-chance housing reforms to regulate when and how criminal history may be considered in rental decisions; and invests \$1 million in an Investments in Health pilot, leveraging federal funding to total \$2.5 million to connect Pennsylvanians experiencing homelessness or housing instability with housing-related supports.
- **Supporting Manufactured Homeowners:** Limits annual lot rent increases in manufactured home communities and requires advance notice of increases, protecting residents — many of whom own their homes but rent the land beneath them — from sudden and unaffordable cost spikes.
- **Addressing Tangled Titles and Preserving Generational Wealth:** Authorizes transfer-on-death deeds for primary residences, providing a streamlined way for homeowners to pass property to heirs, avoid costly probate, access home repair programs, and reduce blight in communities across the Commonwealth.
- **Strengthening Housing Coordination and Accountability:** Creates a Deputy Secretary for Housing at DCED to coordinate housing policy and oversee implementation of the Housing Action Plan.
- **Modernizing Local Planning and Permitting:** Updates the Municipalities Planning Code to reduce regulatory barriers to residential development, improve permitting processes, and incentivize county and regional planning that reflects the diverse housing needs of Pennsylvania's communities.

Building on Three Years of Progress

Since taking office, the Shapiro Administration has laid a strong foundation helping address the Commonwealth's housing needs while protecting renters and homeowners:

- In 2024, Governor Shapiro secured a \$10 million annual increase until 2027 for the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Enhancement (PHARE) Fund — PHARE has funded over 1,000 projects to build or repair more than 8,200 housing units since 2023.
- In his FY 2024-25 budget, Governor Shapiro launched Pennsylvania's first statewide Right-to-Counsel initiative, investing \$2.5 million to provide legal counsel for people facing evictions. He secured the same funding in FY 2025-26.
- Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, DCED has awarded over \$120.3 million through the Whole-Home Repairs program to the 64 counties who joined the program, helping

low and moderate income homeowners and landlords repair, adapt, and weatherize their homes.

- In his FY 2024-25 budget, Governor Shapiro secured a \$5 million increase for the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) to strengthen county-level homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, and rapid rehousing efforts across Pennsylvania.
- The Shapiro Administration also invested \$2.5 million in Emergency Housing Support for local governments, providing municipalities with flexible resources to respond quickly to urgent housing needs and help stabilize families at risk of displacement.

Governor Shapiro remains committed to ensuring every Pennsylvanian has the dignity and security that comes with a safe, affordable place to call home.

For more information about the Housing Action Plan or the Department of Community and Economic Development, visit the DCED [website](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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