

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 8 OF THE CITY CODE TO
CREATE A VACANT PROPERTY REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

#0223

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Willauer

WHEREAS, access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is essential to the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of the City of Wilmington.

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington has experienced rising homeownership costs and rental costs in recent years, placing significant financial strain on low- and moderate-income households; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington has over 1,000 vacant residential properties at the current time; and

WHEREAS, most of the vacant residential properties in the City of Wilmington are privately owned; and

WHEREAS, many of those property owners have the capacity and desire to rehabilitate their vacant properties, but lack the financial resources to complete the repairs needed to return the property to occupancy-ready status; and

WHEREAS, City Council finds that establishing a locally administered City of Wilmington Vacant Property Rehabilitation Assistance Program will serve a valid public purpose by providing temporary financial assistance to owners of vacant residential properties looking to rehabilitate those vacant properties, thereby increasing housing availability and protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of City residents.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON
HEREBY ORDAINS:**

SECTION 1. Chapter 8 of the City Code is hereby amended by creating a new Section 8-10 with the following underlined language:

Section 8-10.-City of Wilmington Vacant Property Rehabilitation Assistance

Program

- (a) Authorization. The Department of Real Estate and Housing is hereby authorized to undertake a program using funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Fund in any fiscal year for the purpose of assisting owners of vacant properties with bringing those properties back into productive use.
- (b) Eligibility. Eligible residential homeowners must provide to the Department of Real Estate and Housing an affidavit containing the following:
- a. Identification;
 - b. Verification of vacant property address;
 - c. If property is to be a rental property:
 - i. Landlord must agree to keep rent affordable for 10 years.
 - ii. Landlord agrees to rent to households at or under eighty percent (80%) of the Area Median Income level.
 - d. If property is to be owner-occupied:
 - i. Verification that their household income is equal to or less than eighty percent (80%) of the Average Median Income for the City of Wilmington.
 - ii. The homeowner must agree to remain in the home as owner-occupants for 10 years.

- (c) Eligible Properties. The vacant property must be located within the corporate boundaries of the City of Wilmington.
- (d) Administration and Enforcement. The Department of Real Estate and Housing is authorized to prescribe, adopt, promulgate, and enforce rules and regulations relating to any matter pertaining to the administration and enforcement of this section.

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its date of passage by the City Council and approval by the Mayor.

First Reading April 16, 2026
Second Reading April 16, 2026
Third Reading

Passed by City Council,

President of City Council

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Approved as to form this 16th
day of April, 2026.


Assistant City Solicitor

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

SYNOPSIS: This Ordinance amends Chapter 8 of the City Code to create a Vacant Property Rehabilitation Assistance Program that shall be administered by the Department of Real Estate and Housing. The Vacant Property Rehabilitation Assistance Program offers financial assistance to owners of vacant properties to make repairs to their vacant properties to bring them back into occupancy-ready status.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT: The Office of Management and Budget has reviewed and analyzed this Ordinance, which amends Chapter 8 of the City Code to create a City of Wilmington Vacant Property Rehabilitation Assistance Program to be administered by the Department of Real Estate and Housing. The Ordinance authorizes the Department to use funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Fund in any fiscal year for the purpose of assisting owners of vacant residential properties with bringing those properties back into productive use.

The Ordinance sets forth the general framework for the proposed program, but leaves several programmatic and administrative details unspecified, including undefined terms, unclear enforcement mechanisms, no stated benefit limits or underwriting standards, and several long-term affordability/occupancy requirements that are not backed by any lien, covenant, repayment, or monitoring structure.

The Ordinance also does not specify the amount of assistance to be provided per property, the number of properties to be assisted annually, or the administrative structure necessary to implement the program. As a result, total program expenditures will depend on future policy decisions, annual funding availability within the Neighborhood Stabilization Fund, and the number of approved applicants.

In addition to any direct assistance payments, the Department of Real Estate and Housing will incur administrative costs associated with implementation of the program, including application intake, eligibility verification, compliance monitoring, affordability enforcement, financial management, inspections, and reporting. These administrative responsibilities may require additional staffing or reallocation of existing personnel resources, depending on

program scale and volume. As a result, the associated administrative costs cannot be determined at this time.

The Ordinance does not appropriate funds. Any expenditures under the program would be limited to available balances in the Neighborhood Stabilization Fund and any related appropriations authorized through the City's annual budget process.

The overall fiscal impact of this Ordinance is dependent on future funding decisions and program participation levels, along with the associated administrative costs, all of which are indeterminate at this time.