



Tiny House Program

Construction FAQ

In partnership with the City of Seattle, SHARE/WHEEL, Nickelsville, and partners throughout the State of Washington, the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) is now one of the largest providers of Tiny House community shelters in the nation, ensuring that people's experience in homelessness is as safe, dignified, and brief as possible.

(1) How much does it cost to build a Tiny House?

The materials to build a tiny house cost \$2,200. With transportation, paint, and other externalities, we estimate that total cost to build and place these houses is roughly \$2,500.

(2) How do I build a Tiny House?

In collaboration with Environmental Works Architects, residents, and builders, we have put together a DIY instruction kit that outlines all of the steps to build a tiny house. Following these instructions will produce our basic tiny house model that is easy to transport, comfortable to live in, and secure for the residents. Depending on your expertise, we invite you to diverge from this instruction manual to increase the livability and aesthetic of the unit, so long as the following parameters are maintained:

- Size: All structures must be 8ft wide or less, and under 10ft tall. They must be less than 120 ft² to be legal structures.
- Skids: In order to transport these houses, we ask that the houses be built on 4"x4" or 4"x6" skids that are 6' apart from the outside.
- Windows: Two windows minimum are preferred for lighting and comfort.
- Insulation: Rigid insulation on the subfloors increases the longevity of the units in wet weather.

(3) What does it take to build a tiny house?

Building a tiny house is an enjoyable and hands-on way to get involved in helping those living unsheltered – but it does require power tools, construction or carpentry experience, and several days to complete. We recommend that any small team have at least two leads with such experience, and that at least three days be set aside to fully finish these tiny houses.

(4) Where can I get the materials from?

All of the materials necessary to build a tiny house are available from Home Depot by delivery. LIHI has an order created with the Bellevue Home Depot that includes all of the materials required to build a tiny house, from lumber to windows. Delivery takes between one and two weeks and the materials will arrive via flatbed and forklift. None of the lumber is pre-cut, and it is always recommended to sort materials and take inventory before cutting and starting the build.

(5) Where should I build the Tiny House?

Tiny Houses can be built either on the site of a new encampment or off-site on private property. The availability of an on-site build varies greatly depending on our timeline for opening an encampment and the needs of our existing encampments. An off-site build, while requiring an eventual house transport, give groups the flexibility to set their own build schedule and use facilities and utilities of their choosing. Because we rarely know of encampment opportunities more than a few months in advance, we ask groups to build their houses at a location where they can be comfortably stored for several months before being placed on site.

(6) How do you transport Tiny Houses?

We contract with an organization, Portable Storage of America (PSA), which has extensive experience in moving tiny houses and sheds of all shapes and sizes. Houses are picked up, transported, and placed on-site via flatbed truck. Although PSA operates their machinery with remarkable precision, there are several recommendations they have made for those choosing where to build their houses: (1) ensure that there is at least 40 feet in front or behind the house to position the truck, (2) follow the recommended skid configuration and use the appropriate hardware, hurricane ties, to secure the skids, and (3) stay within the size limits for the houses to ensure legal transportation. To ask questions about transportation logistics, contact Joe Hengtgen at portablestorage@hotmail.com.



If you have any questions about building tiny houses, including on-site build availability and ordering materials, please contact **Bradford Gerber** at bradgerber@lihi.org



To find out more, contact:
Bradford Gerber
Essential Needs Coordinator
bradgerber@lihi.org

To volunteer, contact:
Josh Castle
Volunteer and Advocacy Coordinator
jcastle@lihi.org