



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Africatown Plaza delivers 126 affordable homes and community empowerment to Seattle's Central District

SEATTLE, WA – On October 5, 2024, Africatown Plaza will officially begin welcoming residents home, placing 126 new affordable apartments into service in Seattle's Central District neighborhood. A ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring remarks from project leaders will begin at 11 a.m. in front of the building (1100 23rd Avenue, Seattle WA 98122).

Created by partners Africatown Community Land Trust (ACLT) and Community Roots Housing, this 7-story mixed-use development includes housing affordable to families and individuals earning up to 60% of the Area Median Income alongside neighborhood resources that anchor, celebrate, and empower Seattle's African American communities.

"Africatown Plaza marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to secure a place in Seattle's future for the Black community that has called the Central District and Seattle home for over 140 years," said K. Wyking Garrett, President and CEO of Africatown Community Land Trust. "This development not only provides affordable homes but also celebrates our culture and history, ensuring that the legacy of the Black community in this area is preserved and strengthened for future generations."

The October 5 event will feature guided tours of the new facilities, refreshments, entertainment, and more.

"Community Roots is proud to partner with ACLT to deliver Africatown Plaza to the Central District," said Christopher Persons, CEO of Community Roots Housing. "This project offers an opportunity to expand on the success of Liberty Bank Building in countering the deplorable legacy of racist redlining practices in the neighborhood. It ensures this historic area is not just a static monument to the African American community that built it, but a place to build a thriving, dynamic future."

Apartments are currently available to lease for households meeting income qualifications and other criteria. With 59 studios, 36 one-bedrooms, 18 two-bedrooms and 13 three-bedroom apartments, Africatown Plaza offers affordable homes designed to meet the needs of both individuals and families while providing a space that is affirming to the African American community. Examples of qualifying incomes are \$63,240 or less for a single-person household and \$90,420 or less for a 4-person household. Currently, rents range from just over \$1,000 for a studio to just over \$2,000 for a 3-bedroom apartment. Prospective applicants can get more information on how to apply at africatownplaza.org.

Ownership of the housing units is shared, with Community Roots Housing owning 51% and ACLT owning 49%. ACLT is the sole owner of the community commercial space, including their new headquarters.

“This project is a testament to our commitment to creating spaces that honor and empower the Black Diaspora community. The collaboration and dedication from our partners and the community have been instrumental in bringing this vision to reality,” said Muammar Hermanstyne, Real Estate Director of Africatown Community Land Trust.

The project partners intentionally maximized minority-owned businesses in design and construction work, exceeding even the high standards set at Liberty Bank Building—over 30%—with nearly half of participating subcontractors owned by people of color. The general contractor is a joint venture of Absher Construction and African American-owned M.A.D. Construction.

The \$66.5 million development of Africatown Plaza was funded by public and private investment. Public support came from the City of Seattle, which provided \$17.2 million in acquisition and construction financing as well as \$1.6 million in Equitable Development Initiative funds; and King County, which provided \$2 million in construction soft debt and \$1.7 million in CHIP funds. KeyBank is providing \$44.8 million in construction financing and \$15.6 million in permanent debt, as well as \$25.7 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity. Private funding for the community commercial space was supported by Rise Together, a collaborative capital campaign of six nonprofit partners creating over 400 new affordable homes and equitable developments across the Seattle area. Norcliffe Foundation, Microsoft, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Wells Fargo have made major philanthropic gifts in support of the project.

We invite and encourage all community members and supporters to join us for the ribbon-cutting event next month. Please [RSVP here](#).

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About Community Roots Housing

Everyone has the right to a quality, affordable home. At Community Roots Housing, this truth drives our work. By embracing community-led development and engaging in deep-rooted partnerships, we’re fostering vibrant, equitable communities where everyone has access to safe, affordable, and welcoming homes. Today, with nearly 50 apartment buildings and over 2,000 residents, we continue our commitment to build community with and for people. Learn more at communityrootshousing.org.

About Africatown Community Land Trust

Africatown Community Land Trust is on a mission to counter the forces of displacement that have long threatened Seattle's Black communities. We are passionately committed to acquiring, stewarding, and developing land to ensure that Seattle's Black community not only survives but thrives. By preserving and nurturing the rich cultural, economic, and historical tapestry of our neighborhoods, we aim to build a resilient and vibrant community where Black residents can continue to create, live, and prosper. Our work is rooted in the belief that everyone deserves a place to call home within their historical and cultural epicenter, free from the fear of displacement.

About Rise Together

Rise Together is a collaborative of six Seattle-area nonprofits working together to create equitable developments with and for community. Together, we are building over 400 new affordable homes in the Central District, Capitol Hill and White Center neighborhoods, alongside space for community programs, health and human services, and local minority-owned businesses. Problems as big as our region's affordability crisis require big solutions. That is why our six organizations with trusted roots in community have broken out of our silos to do more together. Learn more at risetogethernow.org.