

Municipal housing
corporations

Living well and safely in Berlin

Affordable rents in the
municipal portfolio



www.inberlinwohnen.de



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Dear tenants,

Around 50,000 people move to Berlin every year. Each of them looks for a flat, a home, in the city. The Senate of Berlin wants to organise the growth of the city in a socially acceptable way, making sure that Berlin continues to be a city that is worth living in for all people. That includes you being able to afford to go on living in your flat. The dynamic development of Berlin must not become a burden for the people who already live here.

The Senate of Berlin has therefore signed a new cooperation agreement entitled »Leistungsfähige Mieten, Wohnungsneubau und soziale Wohnraumversorgung« (»Affordable rents, new residential construction and the supply of social housing«) with the six state-owned housing corporations.

The state-owned housing corporations are the anchor of Berlin's rental and housing policies, which are aimed at maintaining social balance. Their commercial policy focuses on two main areas: socially-oriented stock management and new residential construction for broad sections of the population.

This cooperation agreement allows us to safeguard affordable rents for existing housing in the city and ensure that low-income households are also provided with somewhere to live.

At the same time, we are strengthening the state-owned housing corporations so that they can make further investments in new housing, by contributing state-owned real estate and through a needs-based increase in equity.

The measures adopted in the cooperation agreement have a direct effect on the housing available and the provision of housing in the city as a whole. This makes the cooperation agreement a key element of the new socially-oriented approach of Berlin's housing policy.

This flyer gives you, as tenants of the city's housing corporations, information about the most important provisions of the cooperation agreement.



Katrin Lompscher

Senator for Urban Development and Housing



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An agreement for Berlin

In April 2017, the six municipal housing corporations and the Senate signed the cooperation agreement entitled »Leistungsfähige Mieten, Wohnungsneubau und soziale Wohnraumversorgung« (»Affordable rents, new residential construction and the supply of social housing«). Their aim: to provide good housing in Berlin.

The focus of the agreement is on a socially differentiated rental policy, under which the six municipal housing corporations offer socially sustainable, low-rent dwellings to their tenants without affecting their own economic performance. The tenants are thus guaranteed affordable housing in all areas of the city – in particular households that are on low incomes.

Other priorities of the agreement:

- Increase in the municipal housing stock through construction and purchase, with a constant commitment to providing a wide range of housing options
- More participation and neighbourhood involvement in construction and modernisation projects
- Protection and conservation of the socially mixed nature of the city as a special feature of Berlin
- Principles of sustainable and ecological construction

Improved performance

With the Rent Alliance of 2012, the Senate and the municipal housing corporations set themselves the task of campaigning for fair rents and more housing. The new agreement goes even further – as a response to the increasing challenges of our growing city.

The agreement is based on the Berlin Housing Provision Law (WoVG Bln) of 2016 and the roadmap, adopted by the Senate in the same year, for an expansion of the municipal housing portfolio to 400,000 flats by 2026. Both of these continue to apply.

The key aspects of the agreement

Even more protection for existing tenants

- The municipal housing corporations guarantee that the overall rents on existing rental contracts will not increase by more than two per cent per year. One-off rent increases of up to four per cent within a period of two years are possible.
- If your net rent without heating amounts to more than 30 per cent of your income, it can be reviewed in the case of hardship.
- In order to prevent anyone losing their flat, the six corporations will take preventative care of tenants who are in arrears with their rent. This includes them



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working with independent welfare organisations and the district authorities.

- In order to further improve housing for existing tenants, the six housing corporations will facilitate the exchange of homes – for example by offering incentives for small households to vacate large flats and move into smaller ones.
- In the case of modernisation works notified as of 01 November 2016, modernisation costs of a maximum of just six per cent will be passed on to tenants.
- The objective is to carry out modernisation projects that do not incur an increase in rents including heating.
- The net rent without heating after modernisation (including the modernisation allocation) will be limited to an amount that does not exceed the local reference rent by more than ten per cent. The hardship clause also applies in this context.

When might a case of hardship exist?

- In households where the total income (including housing benefit) is below the Berlin limits for a WBS (an official document certifying a tenant's eligibility for public housing) (in a single person household, for example, this amounts to 16,800 euros per year, in a two-person household it is 25,200 euros per year).
- In addition, your living space must be adequate for the size of your household (for one person up to 45 m², for two people 60 m², for three 75 m² and for four 85 m²).
- In difficult circumstances or in flats that are badly designed, up to 20 per cent more living space is accepted. This is the case, for example, if you have to use a wheelchair or if a member of your household has recently died.

Did you know?

You can have your rent reviewed!

If the conditions for social hardship apply to you, you can have your rent or rent increase reviewed by your municipal housing corporation. To do so, contact your customer service centre.

More flats under municipal ownership

- By the end of 2021, the public housing stock is supposed to be increased by around 40,000 flats – at least 30,000 of which will be in new buildings. This is an ambitious target, but they are already moving in the right direction: By the end of 2019, the six corporations plan to start building around 20,000 flats. In the same period of time, around 14,000 new municipal flats are scheduled to be completed.
- The six corporations plan to buy another 10,000 flats by 2021.
- To ensure that the six corporations can meet their special urban development responsibilities and can invest in new housing, they must remain economically strong and also need sufficient land to build on. For this reason, the Senate will increasingly contribute

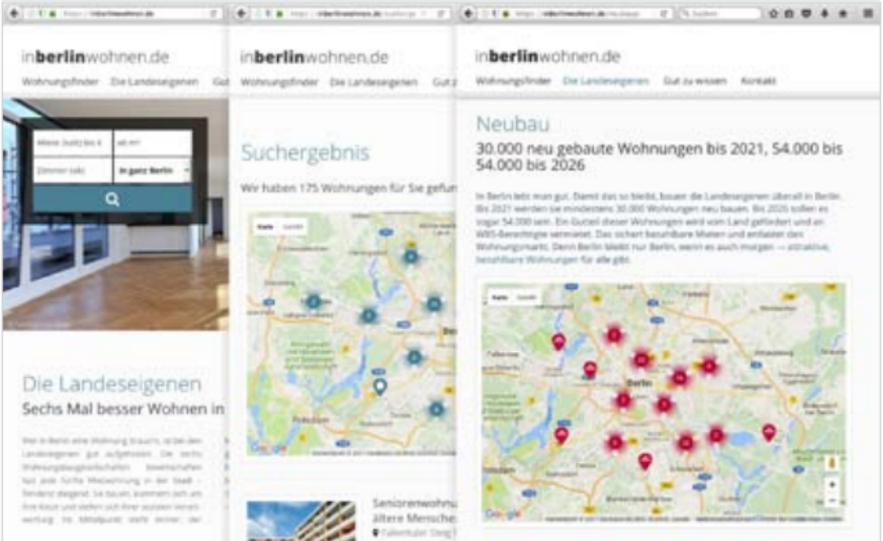
city-owned properties and supply equity to the companies – on an individual basis and if the need is demonstrated.

- In areas of the city that have a preservation order (areas where the unique character of the neighbourhood and community must be retained), the state sector has a legal preemptive right to buy properties. Berlin and its districts will increasingly make use of this right.

Even more diversity in Berlin

- Half of all the flats that the municipal housing corporations will be building by 2021 are planned to be built with public funding and are therefore reserved for households who are eligible for public housing.
- Privately financed new dwellings will be offered at differentiated rents which remain under ten euros per square metre per month on average.
- The municipal housing corporations will rent 60 per cent of all flats that are vacated and come up for re-rent to households who are eligible for public housing.
- The six corporations will rent a quarter of these flats to particular target groups, for example, benefit claimants, homeless people, refugees, students or people in assisted living facilities.
- The municipal housing corporations will charge a rent that does not exceed the local reference rent. This strengthens Berlin's diversity.

Did you know?



Find the right flat!

At → www.inberlinwohnen.de you will find the current flats available from all six corporations at a glance. If there is no flat suitable for you amongst these, you will be sent a notification as soon as a flat that suits you becomes available. In addition, you will find further information here on how to live well, with the municipal housing companies.

Even more participation

- Before any construction or modernisation projects are started, the residents in the neighbourhood receive information and are involved in the process.
- In the case of controversial building projects proposed by the municipal housing corporations, an adjusted urban planning and architectural proposal is made offering different building options.
- The new tenant boards, which monitor and support the development of the six corporations and act as the spokesperson for all tenants, have started work.
- Alongside the tenant associations, who are committed to representing their neighbourhoods' interests, they provide a strong foundation for participation and co-determination.

Did you know?

You can get involved!

There are plenty of opportunities for voluntary involvement with the municipal housing corporations – in the tenant associations and tenant boards, as well as in the life of the neighbourhood. Come along and get involved!

An even more diverse and ecological city

- Mixed-use districts are diverse and varied. This is why the six corporations are ensuring that enough commercial premises are incorporated into the new residential buildings. This strengthens the mix, encourages social institutions and provides a stable social framework for the district.
- In the case of new buildings and renovation projects, the building materials used are increasingly ecologically sound.
- The six corporations are making a further contribution to climate and environmental protection in that they convert attics, for example, and refurbish flats in existing buildings so that they are accessible for wheelchair users. Both of these approaches conserve resources.
- Flats containing asbestos are gradually being refurbished as part of the »Asbestos-free capital city 2030« strategy.
- The newly created Wohnraumversorgung Berlin AöR (Berlin Public Housing Agency) accompanies and advises the municipal housing corporations in their challenging tasks.

Download information

You can access the complete cooperation agreement »Affordable rents, new residential construction and the supply of social housing« via this link (German) → <http://t1p.de/q74n>

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The municipal housing corporations



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