

**HARDEE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Office of Community Development and General Services  
412 West Orange Street, Room 201, Wauchula, Florida 33873  
Telephone: 863-773-6349 \*\*\* Fax: 863-773-5801\*\*\*TDD:711**

**FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER PURCHASE ASSISTANCE**  
An application will be provided after obtaining program requirements.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- ( ) **HOMEBUYER EDUCATION CERTIFICATE** – Certificate presented at conclusion of Workshop.  
[http://www.homebuyerfunds.com/Homebuyer\\_Education/online\\_homebuyer\\_education\\_course\\_outline.htm](http://www.homebuyerfunds.com/Homebuyer_Education/online_homebuyer_education_course_outline.htm)
- ( ) **CREDIT COUNSELING SESSION** – Documented  
Visit <http://www.annualcreditreport.com> or call 1-877-322-8228 to request a Credit Report from one Credit Agency.  
Once a credit report has been received call (863) 773-6349 to schedule Credit Counseling Session.
- ( ) **COMMITMENT LETTER FROM A STATE CERTIFIED LENDER**  
A Commitment Letter is an official approval by a lender of the amount of home mortgage a customer can afford to pay.  
Taking time to be pre-approved keeps the potential buyer from wasting time looking at properties that are out of the buyer's financial range.

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**Completed application and documentation must be returned to the Office of Community Development.**

**IDENTIFICATION**

- ( ) **FLORIDA DRIVERS LICENSE** –  
Valid Florida Driver's license, Florida Identification or other legal document that verifies the Florida residency of the homeowners (with photograph).
- ( ) **SOCIAL SECURITY CARD(S)** -  
Provide a Social Security Card for each member of the household and, when applicable, Citizen Certification or Alien Registration Card.

**PROOF OF INCOME & ASSETS**

(Incomplete applications and/or those that do not show all household members income and assets will not be accepted or possibly be disqualified.)

- ( ) **SALARY** –  
**A copy of the most recent employee earning statement (check stub)** must be provided for each member of the household receiving income. Employer reports are acceptable.  
\* Full time students with earnings must list their income on the application and provide proof of enrollment (transcripts/current schedule).
- ( ) **INCOME TAX RETURNS** –  
Most current income tax return(s) filed with the IRS are required.
- ( ) **RETIREMENT BENEFITS** –  
Any member of the household receiving retirement benefits from any private or government retirement plan must provide a generally acceptable form of verification of the annual or monthly benefits.
- ( ) **SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS** –  
All members of the household receiving Social Security Benefits (retirement, disability, unemployment, etc.) must provide a "Verification of Benefits" letter for the current benefit year. A verification letter can be requested at the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.
- ( ) **ENERGY INVOICE**–  
A copy of the most recent energy (electric) bill, paid or unpaid.
- ( ) **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** –  
A copy of the most recent statement regarding each account is required. This includes statements for: checking, savings, Certificates of Deposit, Stocks, Bonds, and any other investment accounts.

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**Applicant**

**Date**

**Co-Applicant**

**Date**

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NEEDED  
FOR  
BUDGET/CREDIT COUNSELING  
APPOINTMENTS

1. **CREDIT REPORT**
2. Proof of All Household Income (3 Current Pay-stubs, Child Support, Disability, VA Pension, AFDC, Food Stamps, Etc.)
3. Bring **ALL BILLS THAT YOU PAY EVERY MONTH** and not just the front pages, the entire invoice (Electric, Water, Cable, Gas, Telephone, Cell Phone, Car, Insurances, Credit Cards, Loans, Furniture, Food, Medicine, Doctor Bills, etc.)
4. A Complete Budget for the Household will be completed utilizing this information
5. Most appointments last 1 – 1½ Hours; May be Longer, Depending on individual case
6. **Please Be On Time For Your Appointment:** Also, Have All Paperwork and Documents Needed to Assist Your Individual Need. Failure to attend or failure to cancel prior to the scheduled meeting could result in not being scheduled for a future appointment.



HARDEE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & GENERAL SERVICES  
Janet Gilliard, Director  
412 West Orange Street, # 201  
Wauchula, FL 33873

**Home Ownership Financial Assistance Program**  
**FOR THE PURCHASE OF A SINGLE FAMILY HOME**  
(FLORIDA STATUTES PROHIBITS THE PURCHASE OF MOBILE HOMES)

Assistance is provided to those applicants that meet the income and asset eligibility requirement. Requirements for assistance as defined by the Hardee County Housing Assistance Plan in force at time of application will apply to all applicants. Assistance is provided first come, first ready basis, by income category.

The application must be signed by the applicant and if applicable, the co-applicant. **Should the applicant or co-applicant currently own property, a copy of any real estate tax statement for the property must be provided at the time the application is returned.** In the event the owners of the property are separated or divorced, the individual submitting the application must provide a copy of the divorce decree indicating the award of ownership of the house to his/her spouse. The presiding judge must have signed the decree.

**Items to remember when completing the application:**

- All ASSETS must be listed in the space provided on the application. Assets include checking accounts, savings accounts, other property (including outside of Hardee County), rental income, interest income, dividends, certificates of deposit, US Savings Bonds, stocks, etc.
- All information submitted with application will be verified for accuracy. All information requested on the application must be completed as it applies to the individual(s) applying for the SHIP Home Ownership Financial Assistance Program. Any omission of information requested on the application can cause the applicant to be disqualified.
- There is no charge for application or copies of required documents.
- Review the attached checklist for further instructions.

**CONSTRUCTING A HOME**

Should you be requesting assistance to replace a mobile home, or your home that requires more that \$25,000 to repair, bring a copy of the most recent Real Estate Tax Statement for the property(ies) owned by you. If one or more members of the household own other property, the Real Estate Tax Statement for the additional property must also be provided (no matter what State the property is in.)

A copy of the Deed or other legal proof of ownership of the above noted property. In the event one of the "owners" listed on the Real Estate Tax Statement is deceased, a copy of the death certification must be presented with the application.

Applications that have not been completed and/or have not been signed by the applicant(s) will not be accepted for consideration. The completed application (signed by all applicants) and requested documents need to be returned prior to 4:00 p.m. daily to the Hardee County Office of Community Development. Should this be a problem, please contact an office staff member to schedule other arrangements.

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**Janet Gilliard, Community Development Director**  
**Shelly Massey, Community Development Specialist**

**HOME OWNERSHIP FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM OUTLINE  
(OWNER OCCUPIED, SINGLE FAMILY, DETACHED)**

The Home Ownership Assistance Strategy is a program to help very low to moderate income families become homeowners. Funds allocated to this strategy will be used to provide down payment and/or closing cost assistance to qualified applicants.

Income eligibility will be determined by using the Income Limits Guideline Adjusted to Family Size Charts as issued by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation on an annual basis. The Income Guideline Chart in force at the time of the client's application will be used to determine eligibility.

Program Outline: The following lists the general terms of the Home Ownership Assistance Program:

- Eligible Housing: Single family detached units: preexisting new units, existing units and new construction units up to a maximum contracted sales price of \$147,000.
- Applicant Financial Commitment: A minimum of \$1,500 out of pocket money for down payment.
- Deferred Payment Loan: Assistance will be used for Down Payment and/or Closing Cost for the Very Low, the Low, and the Moderate Income categories. **Any excess funds after payment of the closing cost will be applied at the time of closing as principal reduction.**
- Home Ownership Counseling: Homeowners receiving assistance from this Program must complete homebuyer education and a one-on-one Home Ownership Financial Counseling session (provided by the County at no cost to applicant). Emphasis will be placed in the following areas:

HOME BUYING: The purpose of this segment is to make each homeowner more knowledgeable of the issues related to owning a housing unit. It will be used to identify affordable housing opportunities, explain housing terminology used by financial institutions and Realtors, to identify and clarify the role of home buying and financing professionals, provide information related to consumer protection issues and to identify financial alternatives.

HOME MAINTENANCE: The purpose of this segment is to identify the basic types of home maintenance and repairs that can be completed by the homeowners, to educate the homeowner on basic hygiene and home sanitation, to provide information on inexpensive methods of pest control. It will also be used to provide information and guidelines for efficient and economical use of energy (electric/gas).

FINANCIAL COUNSELING: The purpose of this segment will be directed at educating the homeowner in the "how to's" of debt control and reduction, budgeting as well as credit terminology and credit issues such as establishing credit and "cleaning-up" credit, if necessary.

Monthly mortgage payments (principal and interest), plus taxes and insurance, annualized, cannot exceed 30 percent of that amount which represents the combined projected gross annual household income. Housing for which a household devotes more than 30 percent of its income shall be reviewed on a case by case exception, if the first institutional mortgage lender is satisfied that the household can afford mortgage payments in excess of the 30 percent benchmark and notifies the Office of Community Development in writing of their finding.

The recipient of Home Ownership Assistance is required to sign an interest free Deferred Payment Loan Agreement (DPL) conditional grant not to exceed 10 years, and is provided to very low to moderate income homeowners who are unable to obtain conventional financing for this activity. The DPL involves a security instrument (lien) requiring repayment of the loan only if the homeowner sells or transfers ownership of the home, or ceases to use it as his/her primary residence before the lien is satisfied.

If the recipient is found in default of the conditions of the DPL during the term of the lien, the recipient shall pay back to the County's Housing Program, the amount specified according to the DPL.

If a client who received a Home Ownership Assistance Loan should default on their primary mortgage, the lender involved would proceed with foreclosure. The County would retain a second position but would not contest the foreclosure. The County would however, refer the client to a "Foreclosure Counseling and

Assistance Program” if available within the area. The lender would be notified of the referral. The lender involved would retain the right to dispose of the property in the course of normal business practice.

**Applicant Eligibility:** The applicant need not be a resident of Hardee County at the time of application. If selected to receive Program funds, the applicant must agree to purchase a single family, detached house within Hardee County and the house must become the applicant’s legal and principal place of residence.

Any person or family who is a first time home buyer, has not owned a home or mobile home in the last three years, is a displaced homemaker, divorced or owned a house in another county or State within three (3) years prior to application but sold the house to relocate to Hardee County as the applicants primary place of residence may be considered as eligible for Home Ownership Assistance.

**Applicant Qualification:** To qualify, an applicant must attend a homebuyer’s education class and complete the Hardee County application and return it with the application package. In addition, a one on one Credit Counseling appointment will be required before allocation of funds.

Determination of the applicants eligibility will be made by the Director based on the verified information provided by the applicant, the following will occur:

1. A letter will be issued to the applicant indicating initial qualification based on information provided and to remind the applicant of the next step in the process.
2. OCD will begin the process of obtaining “third party” verification of the household’s income and assets as provided by the applicant.

If the “third party” verification finds that the applicant did not provide all of the information requested, or the information provided by the applicant was substantially incorrect, omitted or falsified, the Director or his/her designee will issue a letter to the applicant withdrawing the initial approval.

3. OCD will issue an award letter to the applicant after receiving all necessary verifications and all requirements have been met by applicant. The letter will indicate that he/she meets the requirements of the Program and is eligible for down payment/closing cost assistance.

If all available funds have been set aside to qualified applicants, the letter will state that the current years funds for this Home Ownership Assistance have been allocated and that OCD will keep his/her application open and on file until the end of the Fiscal Year in the event additional funds become available.

If there are funds available, the letter will indicate funds have been set aside for a period of 90 days from the date of the letter. The applicant must locate, complete a Purchase Agreement and successfully close on an approved, single family, detached housing unit within the 90 day time frame.

**Applicant Responsibilities:** The search for a house must be a priority for the applicant. If a purchase agreement has not been executed and a copy provided to OCD by the end of 45 days (from the date of the letter), the applicant will be notified that the set aside has been released and made available to the next qualified applicant.

If a completed Purchase Agreement has been received by OCD, but a mortgage commitment from a State Certified Lender has not been received by the end of 60 days (from the date of the letter) the applicant will be notified that the set aside has been released and made available to the next qualified applicant.

If a Closing has not been scheduled and/or completed by 5:00 P.M. of the 90th day, the applicant will be notified that the set aside has been released and made available to the next qualified applicant. If the 90th day falls on a holiday, Saturday or Sunday, the funds will be released at 5:00 P.M. on the next business day.

Funds for down payment/closing cost assistance are limited and will be issued based on a first qualified, first ready by income category. When the funds are depleted for the current year, letters will be sent to the remaining applicants to notify them that program funds have been depleted for the current year and that they may re-apply for assistance when funds become available and the availability is publicly noticed.

When the applicant has located a house within Hardee County and has received a fully executed Purchase Agreement, the applicant must provide a legible copy of the Purchase Agreement to OCD. The Agreement must indicate the gross purchase price of the single family house, the amount of binder or earnest money provided to the Realtor/Seller, the physical address of the housing unit, the legal description of the property (or a copy of the property record card) and the “not to exceed” closing date.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact a State Certified lending institution to begin the financing process. The applicant is responsible for any non-refundable application fee and State Certified appraisal fee. If financing is approved by the lender, the non-refundable application fee and appraisal fee may be included as part of the closing cost that can be paid by Program funds. To be considered valid as closing costs, the fees must be listed on the lenders “good faith estimate of closing” as pre-paid buyer costs and on the closing agent’s pre-closing HUD settlement statement as pre-paid buyer costs. A copy of the appraisal, any pest inspections, and other home inspections shall be provided to OCD.

Additionally, the applicant is responsible for obtaining a home inspection by a Licensed Contractor or Licensed Home Inspection Service. The inspection report must state that if all items noted in report are repaired, then the home will meet Florida minimum housing standards.

If major deficiencies or conditions are noted that may impact the health and safety of the purchaser or members of the purchasers family, the house will be ineligible for program funds. The deficiencies noted will be brought to the attention of the purchaser and Realtor. The conditions noted must be remedied prior to the actual closing or there must be a legal and binding financial commitment made, in writing, that guarantees the conditions noted will be remedied within 60 days from point of purchase (closing). OCD can withdraw the commitment of Housing Program funds for the purchase if provisions have not been made to repair the deficiencies prior to the closing.

Upon successful completion of their financial process, the lending institution must send a detailed “closing disclosure” to OCD as soon as available. The “closing disclosure” must show the amount of the mortgage for the house being purchased, the interest rate of the mortgage, the amount of down payment required, the monthly principle and interest payment and the monthly payment for taxes and insurance. It also must note the total amount of down payment and the total amount of closing cost.

Upon receipt and approval of the transaction, OCD will cause a check for the allocated amount to be issued to the closing agent (Title/Abstract Company). The money is being provided in the form of a second mortgage (Deferred Payment Loan Agreement). The Deferred Payment Loan Agreement (DPL) will be sent to the closing agent for the signature of the homeowner(s) and notarized by the closing agent at the time of closing.

When the closing agent has finalized the detail closing costs (buyer, seller and lender) the closing agent will provide OCD with a copy of the final HUD Settlement Sheet. The DPL will be returned to OCD for required signatures and returned to the closing agent for recording by the Clerk’s office.

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<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Co-Applicant</b>	<b>Date</b>
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