



## **Welcome Home Ohio**

### **Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Program Guidelines**

The Welcome Home Ohio (WHO) program was created to award grants for the purchase of qualifying residential properties at foreclosure sales, the cost of construction or rehabilitation, or a nonrefundable tax credit for qualifying activities.

Each grant program offering will be funded at \$22,812,500 in each fiscal year and \$20 million in tax credits through the biennium. This opportunity has the potential to fund the incorporation of 1,134 affordable, owner-occupied homes across the state of Ohio. The fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30, the following calendar year.

These program guidelines expand on statutory terms and requirements included in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Sections 122.631-122.633 and 259.30 of House Bill 96. The guidelines in effect at the time a grant agreement is executed will remain the guidelines to abide by for the duration of the grant.

### **Eligible Program Activities**

#### Welcome Home Ohio – Purchasing (WHO-P)

- Grant funds to pay the cost of purchasing qualifying residential property at foreclosure sales after July 1, 2025.
- A maximum grant of \$100,000 per residential property at foreclosure sales.

#### Welcome Home Ohio – Rehabilitation/Construction (WHO-RC)

- Grant funds to assist in the cost of rehabilitation or construction of qualifying residential property.
- A maximum grant of \$100,000 per qualifying residential property.

#### Welcome Home Ohio – Tax Credits (WHO-TC)

- Tax credit is allocated once the qualifying residential property is sold to a qualifying individual.
- Maximum of \$90,000 or 90% of the cost of rehab/construction, whichever is less.
- State or federal grant funds are subtracted from the cost of rehab/construction prior to calculating the tax credit amount.
- If the director of the Ohio Department of Development determines the applicant qualifies for a tax credit, a tax credit certificate will be issued to the applicant identified with a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and listing the amount of credit that is eligible to be transferred or claimed on income and financial institutional taxes.
- Certification of occupancy must be signed within the most recent fiscal year. For example, a home sold in fiscal year 2025 could be submitted for a tax credit in fiscal year 2026, but not a home sold in fiscal year 2024.
- Tax credits shall be issued up to June 30, 2027.

WHO-Purchase (WHO-P) grant funds shall only be used to pay the cost of purchasing qualifying residential property at foreclosure sales. WHO-Rehabilitation or New Construction (WHO-RC) grant funds shall only be used to pay the cost of rehabilitation or construction of qualifying residential property. WHO funded projects can be leveraged with other funding sources such as other residential rehab/construction grants. Up to \$2,000 of each grant award may be used to fund the qualifying financial literacy counseling requirement; however, grant funds are not available for any other administrative function.

WHO-TC credit is allocated once the qualifying residential property is sold to a qualifying individual.

## Definitions

- Community Improvement Corporation: The economic development corporation or a county land reutilization corporation.
- Electing Subdivision: A municipal corporation that has enacted an ordinance or a township or county that has adopted a resolution of adopting and implementing procedures to facilitate the effective reutilization of nonproductive land situated within its boundaries.
- Eligible Developer: A nonprofit corporation based in Ohio with a primary activity of the development and preservation of affordable housing; a limited partnership, domestic limited partnership, or limited liability company whose general partner or manager is this type of nonprofit; a community improvement corporation; a community urban redevelopment corporation.
- Industrialized Unit: A building unit or assembly of closed construction fabricated in an off-site facility, that is substantially self-sufficient as a unit or as part of a greater structure, and that requires transportation to the site of intended use.
- Lead Entity: The award recipient and the responsible part with whom Development executes a grant agreement for the grant funds.
- Manufactured Home: A building unit or assembly of closed construction that is fabricated in an off-site facility and constructed in conformance with the federal construction and safety standards, and that has a permanent label or tag affixed to it certifying compliance with all applicable federal construction and safety standards.
- Mobile Home: 1) A building unit or assembly of closed construction that is fabricated in an off-site facility, is more than 35 body feet in length, or 2) when erected on site, is 320 or more square feet, is built on a permanent chassis, is transportable in one or more sections, and does not qualify as a manufactured home or as an industrialized unit.
- Qualifying Financial Literacy Counseling: A homeownership course with a curriculum that includes basic home maintenance training and financial literacy.
- Qualifying Counseling Provider: An individual, business, nonprofit organization, or political subdivision, including an agency or instrumentality thereof, that is licensed, certified, or authorized to provide homeownership counseling and financial literacy as one of its primary functions, including housing counselors certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA).
- Qualifying Median Income: 120% of median income for the county where the property is located; area median income.
- Qualified Nonprofit Developer: A nonprofit corporation that is 1) incorporated in the state of Ohio, 2) engaged in community development activities primarily within an identified geographic area of operation in Ohio, and 3) has as its primary purpose the improvement of the physical, economic, or social environment by addressing critical problems in that

geographic area of operation, including housing.

- Qualifying Residential Property: Single-family residential property that has at least 800 square feet of habitable space per unit. Includes a single unit in a multi-unit property containing 10 or fewer units and excludes mobile homes.

## Applicant Qualifications

WHO-P and WHO-RC funding is available to land banks, county land reutilization corporations, electing subdivisions, and qualified nonprofit developers.

WHO-TC are available for land banks, county land reutilization corporations, electing subdivisions, qualified nonprofit developers, and eligible developers.

An applicant may apply for any of the WHO programs for which they are eligible. For individual properties, the following funding streams are the only ones permitted:

- WHO-P
- WHO-P and WHO-RC
- WHO-P and WHO-TC
- WHO-RC
- WHO-TC

Applicants must have sufficient administrative capacity in place to perform the required monitoring. Performance on previous WHO awards will be a factor in evaluating administrative and contractor capacity.

Individuals will not be applying for program funding on their own behalf – they must work with an organization who is eligible to apply for program funding.

## Welcome Home Ohio Fund Requirements

Residential properties purchased with WHO-P funds must be acquired at foreclosure sales and documented with a certificate of sale filed with the court. The deliverables for all three WHO programs are qualifying residential properties which are owner-occupied and have at least 800 square feet of habitable space. Single-family homes and a single unit in a multi-family property both qualify. This includes:

- A single-family house
- One unit of a duplex, triplex, or fourplex
- A townhouse
- A row house
- One condo in a complex/community
- Modular homes (industrialized units)
- Manufactured homes
- A residence zoned as mixed-use

Ineligible properties include:

- Rental properties
- Residential properties with more than 10 connected residential units
- Apartments with more than 10 units

- Commercial property
- Mobile homes

Qualifying residential properties on which program funds are spent shall be sold with a deed restriction ensuring only eligible individuals own and occupy the property. Eligible Individuals are defined as those who meet all of the following requirements:

- Have annual income not more than 120% of the area median income. Area median income is updated annually and found at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>
- Demonstrate the financial means to purchase the qualifying residential property.
- For at least three years after the date of purchase, agree to maintain ownership of the qualifying residential property, to occupy it as a primary residence, and not to rent any portion of the property to another individual for use as a dwelling.
- For the 15 years following the date of the initial sale, agree to restrict the sale of the qualifying residential property to:
  - any purchaser/household who has an income more than 120% of the area median income or
  - an electing subdivision, county land reutilization corporation, or qualified nonprofit developer with an eligible affordable housing program, which elected to include in the deed restriction a right of first refusal to repurchase the property for the purpose of ensuring that the property is ultimately sold to an individual or individuals who have annual income that is not more than the qualifying median income.
- Agree the director of Development is a third-party beneficiary of the purchase agreement.
- Agree to pay the penalty if ownership is not maintained according to regulations.

Qualifying residential properties on which grant funds are spent or tax credits are issued shall not be sold for more than \$220,000 per property. An electing subdivision, county land reutilization corporation, or qualified nonprofit developer shall use all profits derived from the sale of qualifying residential property on which grant funds are spent, including profits derived from the resale of such property to a subsequent purchaser, for the electing subdivision's or county land reutilization corporation's land reutilization program or the qualified nonprofit developer's housing program. Details on this reporting requirement will be available in the Reporting Guidelines.

## Program Limits

An organization may apply for the funding of as many qualifying properties as their capacity allows. There is not a maximum grant ceiling for applications nor is there a minimum grant floor for applications. Awarded amounts may be lower than the amount applied for in order to achieve statewide coverage. Administrative and construction capacity must be detailed in the application. Additional funds are not available for administration.

WHO-P has a maximum of \$100,000 per property. WHO-RC has a maximum of \$100,000 per property. WHO-TC can be requested for 90% of the cost of rehab/construction up to \$90,000 per property.

## Construction Standards

The rehabilitation or construction of qualifying residential properties for all activities funded by WHO must be completed according to all applicable construction and design standards. All rehabilitation and new construction activities completed with WHO funds must be completed to local building code, at minimum. Residential Code of Ohio is applicable to all new construction units.

## Reporting and Monitoring

Grantees are required to submit monthly Performance Reports and Address Reporting for each address where funds are requested. User manuals for these reporting tools and further Reporting Guidelines will be available on the Welcome Home Ohio webpage of Development's website. Reporting requirements will also be detailed in grant agreements.

Applicants will be responsible for the following monitoring and reporting processes:

- Reviewing and documenting income eligibility for qualifying buyers.
- A minimum of six months of financial literacy and counseling requirement.
  - This may be fulfilled with either pre-purchasing or post-purchasing financial literacy programs and then follow-ups throughout the six months following the date of sale.
- Annually certify to Development for the duration of the affordability period. Annual certification will include:
  - The qualified home buyer remained in the property for the entire three years following the date of sale and is not renting any portion of the home.
  - The date that any qualifying residential property is resold.
  - Reporting on profits earned from the sale of a qualifying residential property and documentation supporting that these profits were spent on the land reutilization program or housing program (as applicable).
- Assist in monitoring the 15-year affordability requirement by income qualifying future buyers.

Development will be responsible for the following monitoring requirements:

- Calculating the penalty and collecting the penalty if it is violated.
- Maintain a list of homes that are still subject to the 15-year affordability deed restriction.
  - This list will not be public record.
- Monitor and enforce the 15-year affordability requirement by income qualifying future buyers.

## Penalties

The applicant would repay all funds expended for the following reasons:

- Expenses are for activities other than purchasing, construction, rehabilitation, or financial literacy counseling.
- Expenses are more than the allowable financial literacy counseling set-aside amount.
- The qualifying residential property is not sold to an eligible buyer.
- The property is sold without a deed restriction.

The homebuyer would be accountable for the following penalties:

- The homebuyer must occupy the home as a primary residence and not rent any portion of it for three years after the date of purchase. The penalty for not abiding by this requirement is the homeowner must pay Development the amount of the program funds attributable to the property, reduced by one-third for each full year they owned the property and met the requirements.
- The property must be sold to either a household earning not more than 120% the local median income at the time of sale, or sold to an eligible affordable housing program, for 15 years after the date of purchase. To enforce this, all homes will have a deed restriction and Development is granted authority and standing to sue for the enforcement of the deed restriction.

Development may waive penalties faced by the homeowner if it is determined that making a repayment would constitute a hardship to the seller. Hardship, with respect to the homeowner, may include divorce, disability, illness, loss of income, or any other hardship supported by documentation and approved by Development.

## **Program Milestones**

The grant agreement will establish milestones for production and expenditures. If funds are not expended in a timely manner, funds could be reduced by an amendment to allow Development to reallocate ensuring expenditure.

## **Updates to Program Guidelines**

Changes and/or corrections to any part of the program guidelines may be made from time to time, and will be provided by Development to applicants and posted on Development's website. Development reserves the right to make exceptions to these guidelines on a case-by-case basis for any reason.