



Upward Mobility
for all americans



2020

Application Guide &
Resource Manual



Table of Contents

1

HUD's Public Housing Program _____ 3

2

Section 8 Housing Program _____ 6

3

Housing Choice Vouchers _____ 8

4

Tenant Based Vouchers - HUD _____ 11

5

Rental Assistance Demonstration _____ 12

6

Downpayment Assistance _____ 13



HUD's Public Housing Program

WHAT IS PUBLIC HOUSING?

Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single family houses to highrise apartments for elderly families. There are approximately 1.2 million households living in public housing units, managed by some 3,300 HAs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers Federal aid to local housing agencies (HAs) that manage the housing for low-income residents at rents they can afford. HUD furnishes technical and professional assistance in planning, developing and managing these developments.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Public housing is limited to low-income families and individuals. An HA determines your eligibility based on:

- 1) annual gross income
- 2) whether you qualify as elderly, a person with a disability, or as a family
- 3) U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status.

If you are eligible, the HA will check your references to make sure you and your family will be good tenants. HAs will deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may be expected to have a detrimental effect on other tenants or on the project's environment.

HAs use income limits developed by HUD. HUD sets the lower income limits at 80% and very low income limits at 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which you choose to live. Income limits vary from area to area so you may be eligible at one HA but not at another. The HA serving your community can provide you with the income levels for your area and family size, or you can also find the income limits here on the internet.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are interested in applying for public housing, contact your local HA. If you have trouble contacting the HA, contact the local HUD Field Office.

HOW DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?

The application must be written. Either you or the HA representative will fill it out. An HA usually needs to collect the following information to determine eligibility:

- (1) Names of all persons who would be living in the unit, their sex, date of birth, and relationship to the family head;
- (2) Your present address and telephone number;
- (3) Family characteristics (e.g., veteran) or circumstances (e.g., living in substandard housing) that might qualify the family for tenant selection preferences;
- (4) Names and addresses of your current and previous landlords for information about your family's suitability as a tenant;
- (5) An estimate of your family's anticipated income for the next twelve months and the sources of that income;
- (6) The names and addresses of employers, banks, and any other information the HA would need to verify your income and deductions, and to verify the family composition; and
- (7) The PHA also may visit you in your home to interview you and your family members to see how you manage the upkeep of your current home.

After obtaining this information, the HA representative should describe the public housing program and its requirements, and answer any questions you might have.



WILL I NEED TO PRODUCE ANY DOCUMENTATION?

Yes, the HA representative will request whatever documentation is needed (e.g., birth certificates, tax returns) to verify the information given on your application. The PHA will also rely on direct verification from your employer, etc. You will be asked to sign a form to authorize release of pertinent information to the PHA.

WHEN WILL I BE NOTIFIED?

An HA has to provide written notification. If the HA determines that you are eligible, your name will be put on a waiting list, unless the HA is able to assist you immediately. Once your name is reached on the waiting list, the HA will contact you. If it is determined that you are ineligible, the HA must say why and, if you wish, you can request an informal hearing.

WILL I HAVE TO SIGN A LEASE?

If you are offered a house or apartment and accept it, you will have to sign a lease with the HA. You may have to give the HA a security deposit. You and the HA representative should go over the lease together. This will give you a better understanding of your responsibilities as a tenant and the HA's responsibilities as a landlord.

ARE THERE ANY SELECTION PREFERENCES?

Sometimes there are. Giving preference to specific groups of families enables an HA to direct their limited housing resources to the families with the greatest housing needs. Since the demand for





housing assistance often exceeds the limited resources available to HUD and the local HAs, long waiting periods are common. In fact, an HA may close its waiting list when there are more families on the list than can be assisted in the near future.

Each HA has the discretion to establish preferences to reflect needs in its own community. These preferences will be included in the HAs written policy manual. You should ask what preferences they honor so you will know whether you qualify for a preference.

How is rent determined?

Your rent, which is referred to as the Total Tenant Payment (TTP) in this program, would be based on your family's anticipated gross annual income less deductions, if any. HUD regulations allow HAs to exclude from annual income the following allowances: \$480 for each dependent; \$400 for any elderly family, or a person with a disability; and some medical deductions for families headed by an elderly person or a person with disabilities. Based on your application, the HA representative will determine if any of the allowable deductions should be subtracted from your annual income. Annual income is the anticipated total income from all sources received from the family head and spouse, and each additional member of the family 18 years of age or older. The formula used in determining the TTP is the highest of the following, rounded to the nearest dollar:

- (1) 30 percent of the monthly adjusted income. (Monthly Adjusted Income is annual income less deductions allowed by the regulations);
- (2) 10 percent of monthly income;
- (3) welfare rent, if applicable; or
- (4) a \$25 minimum rent or higher amount (up to \$50) set by an HA.

What is the role of the HA?

An HA is responsible for the management and operation of its local public housing program. They may also operate other types of housing programs.

(1) On-going functions: (a) Assure compliance with leases. The lease must be signed by both parties; (b) Set other charges (e.g., security deposit, excess utility consumption, and damages to unit); (c) Perform periodic reexaminations of the family's income at least once every 12 months; (d) Transfer families from one unit to another, in order to correct over/under crowding, repair or renovate a dwelling, or because of a resident's request to be transferred; (e) Terminate leases when necessary; and (f) maintain the development in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition.

(2) Sometimes HAs provide other services, that might include such things as: homeownership opportunities for qualified families; employment training opportunities, and other special training and employment programs for residents; and support programs for the elderly.

How long can i stay in public housing?

In general, you may stay in public housing as long as you comply with the lease.

If, at reexamination your family's income is sufficient to obtain housing on the private market, the HA may determine whether your family should stay in public housing.

Section 8 Housing Program



Section 8 was born in 1937 as part of a housing reform act passed by congress. Its a program that helps provide Rental Payment Assistance for low-income households. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development funds and manages this program. This department administers vouchers and provides federal funds to local Public Housing Agencies.

Any individual or family that receives the housing voucher is free to choose a housing unit where the landlord agrees to rent under the Section 8 housing program. The housing unit must meet the minimum standards for safety and health, as determined by the Public Housing Authority.

What are the eligibility requirements for Section 8 housing?

To qualify for Section 8 Housing, you must be a citizen of the United States or belong to a specified category of non-citizens with eligible immigration status. The Public Housing Agencies determine your eligibility based on your annual gross income and the size of your family. Generally, your family's total income should not exceed 50 percent of the median income of the metropolitan or county you want to live in. By law, Public Housing Agencies must provide 75 percent of the vouchers to families with gross incomes of less than 30 percent of the area's median income.

Median incomes vary from location to location. The Public Housing Agency serving your area is required to notify you of the income limits and other pertinent eligibility requirements and family size requirements. If by some chance the Public Housing Authority makes the decision that our family is eligible for housing assistance, they can provide you with the voucher immediately, or place you on a waiting list. As soon as they reach your name on the waiting list, they contact you and provide you with your housing voucher.

To be eligible for a housing voucher, you must be at least 18 years old. Low-income applicants must hold a steady job to meet the minimum income requirements, with the exception of disabled applicants. They must also be a family, which is defined as a group of people, with or without children, who are related by affinity or blood and who live together in a familial relationship. This relationship can be unofficial or legally recognized.

To qualify, no one in your family should own any real estate, whether commercial or residential. You should also attend and complete a housing counseling program which are offered by Housing Counseling Agencies. You can find a Housing Counseling Agency in your neighborhood right here. All applicants must go through a background check to ensure they have not been convicted of a criminal offense. For example, a person who is required to register as a sexual offender is not eligible for Section 8 assistance.

PHAs may, at their own discretion, establish local preferences to meet the housing needs of their particular community. This means that people who fall under a certain category may get priority and move ahead of the waiting list if their situation is particularly dire. For example, PHA may give specialized treatment to a person who is homeless or living in substandard conditions. They may also give priority to a person who has been involuntarily displaced, or who spends more than 50 percent of his income on rent. In some states, victims of domestic violence may get priority preference for a housing voucher. This ensures that people who are in urgent need of housing assistance can get it as soon as possible.

Applying for a Section 8 housing voucher



To apply for Section 8 Housing, the applicant simply has to visit his nearest HUD or PHA offices. You have to provide proof of identification, usually in the form of your Social Security card. Other forms of identification, such as a passport or a birth certificate, may also be accepted.

How does the housing voucher function?

After receiving the housing voucher, the individual can find a housing unit in a specified complex or in the private sector and lease it. The PHA must inspect the house to ensure it meets safety and sanitary standards and that the rent is reasonable. The PHA then determines the payment standard for the home. Most people only pay 30 percent of their adjusted income. Adjusted income is computed by taking the gross income of the household and deducting expenses for full-time students, dependents under 18 years old, elderly and disabled persons in the household and certain medical expenses. The tenant is required to pay his portion of the rent, and the housing authority covers the remaining portion of rent. If the recipient of the voucher has to move from one location or state to another, he can carry his voucher with him. This means that a person who gets a voucher in one state can use it to get housing assistance in any part of the country.

 [Click Here for Apply Section 8 Here](#)



Role of tenant, landlord, PHA, and HUD in the Section 8 housing program



Different players have different roles under the section 8 housing program. The tenant is responsible for finding a unit and signing a lease. Some landlords may require a security deposit. The tenant must then comply with the lease and pay his share of the rent on time. He should also keep the property grounds in immaculate condition and should also inform the Public Housing Agency if there is any change in household income or the composition of the family.

The landlord's role is to provide a safe and decent place to live for the tenant at a reasonable rent. His property should also meet the set quality standards, and he must provide the services agreed upon in the lease.

The role of the Public Housing Agency is to provide vouchers, inspect housing units annually, and reexamine the family's composition and income at least once a year. The United States department of Housing and Urban Development's role is to provide funds to the PHA to help assist eligible families to get housing assistance.

The application process is easy and straightforward for eligible applicants. However, the process is made even easier by landlords who are willing to lease out their rental homes or apartments to section 8 tenants. Some of the reasons why landlords may prefer tenants in this program include:

Landlords get access to a large pool of potential renters. A landlord who rents under this program rarely has an empty apartment or home. This is because so many people apply for housing assistance.

Prompt payments. Tenants are required to pay their share of the rent on time. Furthermore, the Public Housing Agency also pays its share of the rent very promptly. Therefore, the landlord can be sure that he gets his payments on time every month.

Tenants have an incentive to take care of the home. One of the requirements of retaining the section 8 voucher is to take good care of the property and not to damage it. This gives landlords peace of mind, as they never have to worry about the wanton damage of their property.

Any individual who has a job but who is struggling to make ends meet does not have to live in despair. If you are a low-income earner or if you spend more than 50 percent of your income every month on rent, you can apply for housing assistance. This will help you to better manage your finances and gain your financial footing so that you can provide for yourself and your dependents.

Housing Choice Vouchers

The application process is easy and straightforward for eligible applicants. However, the process is made even easier by landlords who are willing to lease out their rental homes or apartments to section 8 tenants. Some of the reasons why landlords may prefer tenants in this program include, Landlords get access to a large pool of potential renters. A landlord who rents under this program rarely has an empty apartment or home. This is because so many people apply for housing assistance.

Prompt payments. Tenants are required to pay their share of the rent on time. Furthermore, the Public Housing Agency also pays its share of the rent very promptly. Therefore, the landlord can be sure that he gets his payments on time every month.





Tenants have an incentive to take care of the home. One of the requirements of retaining the section 8 voucher is to take good care of the property and not to damage it. This gives landlords peace of mind, as they never have to worry about the wanton damage of their property.

The housing choice voucher (popularly known as Section 8) was introduced by the U.S federal government in the 1970s. It is the dominant form of housing assistance provided by the government. The main aim of the HCV Voucher Program is available to assist low-income families, the disabled, the elderly and other eligible US residents to afford decent housing in the private market. More than 2000 local and state agencies run the program to help millions of families get access to better housing.

There are four key players in this program: Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), HUD, the landlord, and the tenant. PHAs receive funds from HUD and are responsible for administering the funds through the voucher program. You can apply for a voucher anywhere in the US but must lease a housing unit located within the jurisdiction of the issuing PHA for the first twelve months. The housing unit must meet the program requirements such as adequate levels of health and safety, as set by the respective PHA. Eligible housing units include single-family homes, apartments, and townhouses. It may also include your present residence. The local PHA pays part of the rent (subsidy) to the landlord and the individual living in the home is required to pay the remaining amount.

Who is eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher Grant?

Only families that need housing assistance the most are targeted and assisted. PHAs receive very many applications each year and the award of the voucher is on a competitive basis.

For a family participant to be considered, it meets the following requirements:

HUD's definition of family

The HUD has set guidelines on the composition of a family that is eligible for the program. PHAs follow these guidelines. A family can be a single person or a group of people. The following families are eligible for the program:

- An elderly family: Headed or co-headed by a person who is 62 years or older.
- A family with or without children. Even if a child is away for foster care, the child is considered part of that family.
- A disabled family: A family whose sole member has disabilities and has one or more live-in aides. The person may be the head, co-head or child.
- A displaced family: This is a family in which the sole member or each of the members has been displaced by government action or natural disasters recognized by federal laws.
- A member of a family who has remained after the other part of an assisted tenant family has left the unit.

Income limits specified by HUD

Eligible households must be low-income. Most of them are extremely low-income. Their income is compared to the local median and must not exceed 30 percent of the higher amount between local median and the poverty line. This means that if the local



median is higher than the poverty line, household income is compared with the median and vice versa. However, a small portion of households with incomes up to 80 percent of the local median is also considered.



Citizenship or immigrant status

All U.S. citizens are eligible for a housing choice voucher. Persons claiming to be immigrants have to present documentation to PHA and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), to show that they qualify for one immigration category. Citizen spouses and children of non-citizen students are eligible, while non-citizen spouses of citizen students aren't.

Once you receive the voucher, you have to search a unit in an area that meets the income limits set by voucher.

How to apply for the program

Applications may be submitted online through an application portal. Go to the local PHA's website and create an account. Applications are open during specific times of the year. You should, therefore, research about when you're the PHA in your area accepts new applications for admission to the program. Before applying for housing assistance, contact the local PHA to get advice on the application process, for different states might have specific application procedures.

Once the waiting list is closed, the PHA does not accept additional applications. Due to a large number of applicants, applications are maintained on a waiting list. You may have to wait for as long as one or two years for your name to be reached on the list.

The screening process

If your name is next on the waiting list, your family will be invited to an application interview to begin making final applications. There will likely also be background checks on family members above 18 years of age and credit checks on those applying for the housing. The information provided is then verified for eligibility and accuracy. You can get a free copy of your background check and credit report here.

Congratulations! You got a voucher

After the screening process, the local PHA presents the family with a voucher. The family signs all the required consent forms and can begin searching for an appropriate housing unit. They must find one within 60 days. If the family decides to take up a unit, it will have to submit all relevant documents about the unit to the issuing PHA for review and approval. The PHA determines if the house's condition is satisfactory, and whether or not the proposed rent is reasonable compared to other units in the area and the market rents. It also ensures that the amount to be paid by the family does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly income. The voucher can also be used to pay rent for the current unit.

What happens when you move to another state?

There are many reasons that could lead to a family's relocation. It could be a change in job location or family size. The design of housing choice vouchers allows you to move and retain housing assistance. You just need to notify the PHA well ahead of time so that it can terminate the existing lease and verify that the new housing unit meets all required standards.



Benefits of the housing choice vouchers

1. It helps to reduce poverty. This program has lifted millions of people above the poverty line.
2. The program has helped low-income households to move to better neighborhoods thus reducing crowding in relatives' places and the need for frequent moving.
3. Low-wage workers can make ends meet with a voucher. If a voucher holder is not a person with disabilities, they work. The subsidy provided by the voucher is very significant to their earnings. For example, a mother with two children working 30 hours a week and paying \$700 for rent can get a \$400 subsidy per month through a housing choice voucher.
4. Housing assistance also leads to lower costs of health, education and other public services.

If your family is eligible for a housing choice voucher, go ahead and follow the simple and clear application procedure. You better be on the wait list.

 [For Section 8 Housing Options CLICK HERE](#)

Tenant Based Vouchers - HUD

What are tenant-based vouchers?

Tenant-based vouchers increase affordable housing choices for very low-income families. Families with a tenant-based voucher choose and lease safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing.

What organizations are eligible to apply for tenant-based voucher funding from HUD?

PHAs authorized under State law to develop or operate housing assistance programs may apply for funding.

How do PHAs apply for tenant-based voucher funding?

PHAs respond to notices of funding availability (NOFAs) published in the Federal Register. Each NOFA identifies allocation areas, amount of funds available per area, and the selection criteria for rating and ranking applications.

What families are eligible to apply for tenant-based vouchers?

Very low-income families (i.e. families with incomes below 50% of area median income) and a few specific categories of families with incomes up to 80% of the area median income. These include families that are already assisted under the 1937 U.S. Housing Act, such as families physically displaced by public housing demolition, and owners opting out of project-based section 8 housing assistance payments (HAP) contracts. (HUD determines median income levels for each area annually.)

How does a PHA determine if a family is income eligible?

The PHA compares the family's annual income (gross income) with the HUD-established very low-income limit or low-income limit for the area. The family's gross income cannot exceed this limit.



How do families obtain tenant-based vouchers?

Families apply to a local public housing agency (PHA) that administers this program. When an eligible family comes to the top of the PHA's housing choice voucher waiting list, the PHA issues a housing choice voucher to the family.

 [Section 8 Housing Options CLICK HERE](#)

How does a family obtain an apartment once they have a voucher?

It is the responsibility of a family to find a unit that meets their needs. If the family finds a unit that meets the housing quality standards, the rent is reasonable, and the unit meets other program requirements, the PHA executes a HAP contract with the property owner. This contract authorizes the PHA to make subsidy payments on behalf of the family. If the family moves out of the unit, the contract with the owner ends and the family can move with continued assistance to another unit.

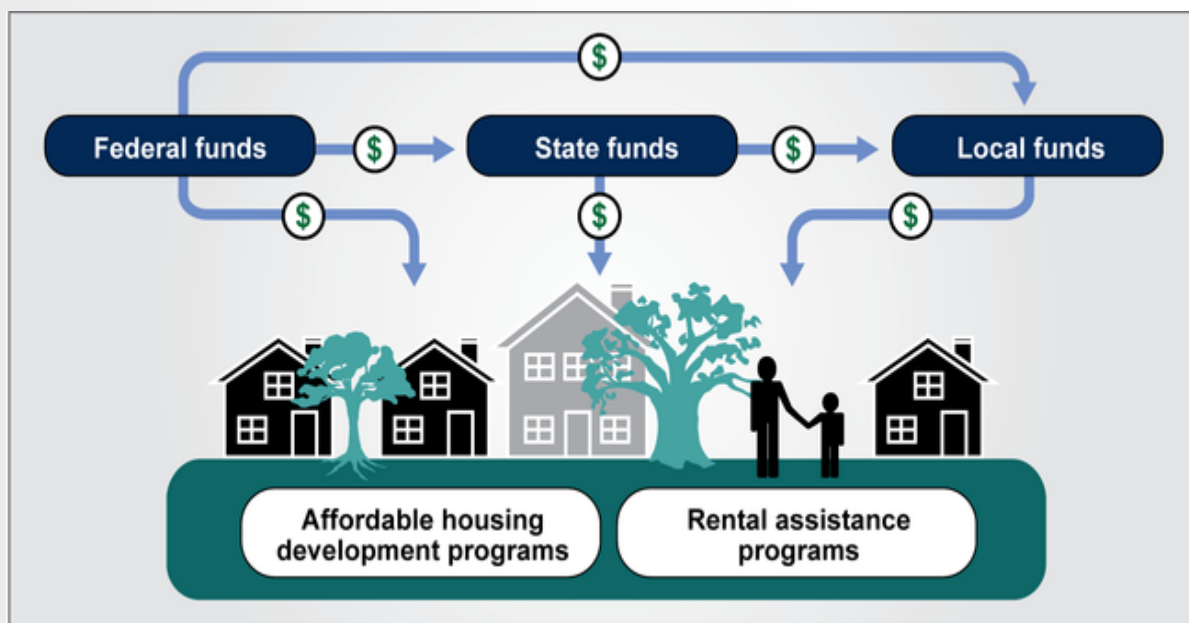
How much rent do vouchers cover?

The PHA pays the owner the difference between 30 percent of adjusted family income and a PHA determined payment standard or the gross rent for the unit, whichever is lower. The family may choose a unit with a higher rent than the payment standard and pay the owner the difference.

Do families have to lease a unit in the jurisdiction where the PHA issued the voucher?

No. A family may choose a unit anywhere in the United States where there is a PHA that administers a tenantbased housing choice voucher program. However, the family may only use the voucher to lease a unit in an area where the family is income eligible at admission to the program.

Rental Assistance Demonstration



The Rental Assistance Demonstration was created in order to give public housing authorities (PHAs) a powerful tool to preserve and improve public housing properties and address the \$26 billion dollar nationwide backlog of deferred maintenance. RAD

also gives owners of three HUD “legacy” program (Rent Supplement, Rental Assistance Payment, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation) the opportunity to enter into long-term contracts that facilitate the financing of improvements.



FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RAD PUBLIC HOUSING CONVERSIONS

1. RAD allows public housing agencies to leverage public and private debt and equity in order to reinvest in the public housing stock. This is critical given the 25.6 billion dollar backlog of public housing capital improvements.
2. In RAD, units move to a Section 8 platform with a long-term contract that, by law, must be renewed. This ensures that the units remain permanently affordable to low-income households.
3. Residents continue to pay 30% of their income towards the rent and they maintain the same basic rights as they possess in the public housing program.
4. RAD maintains the public stewardship of the converted property through clear rules on ongoing ownership and use.
5. The RAD program is cost-neutral and does not increase HUD’s budget. This program simply shifts units from the Public Housing program to the Section 8 program so that providers may leverage the private capital markets to make capital improvements

Downpayment Assistance

Spread the word...there are some little-known yet phenomenal programs to help first time home buyers in the Seattle real estate market get into a home.

First, there is the \$8000 tax credit for first time buyers completing a purchase by 12/1/2009. This is not a deduction, but a full credit against taxes owed. The definition of “first-time home buyer” includes someone who has not owned a home or has owned but did not live in the home for the past three years.

In addition, and less well-known, there is state and local government bond money available to help first time buyers with down payments. These programs include those sponsored by most local metropolitan cities, some are for rural King County and some are for targeted groups like teachers and other school/college employees and veterans. Down payment assistance amounts vary, but can be as much as \$60,000. Some do not require repayment for 30 years and they accrue at simple interest. It is also possible to “layer” programs: participation in one does not disqualify someone from another program.

But, wait, there’s more. Some bond money programs can be used by people who are not first time buyers, but have other special situations, and the overall income levels to qualify in King County are high. A family of 1 - 2 people can make up to \$90,000 a year and still qualify for assistance to purchase a home costing up to \$450,000.

The tax credit and bond money programs, combined with today’s very low interest rates and lower purchase prices make this an amazing time to buy a starter home. So, if you know someone who wants to buy a home, but thinks they can’t afford it, please share this article.

When people ask about real estate, they want to know about the aspects that affect

them: their finances and their quality of life. They see the news and some of the local sales data and want to know how it applies to them.



How Downpayment Assistance Works

Potential home buyers often discover that while they'll have no trouble making their monthly mortgage payments, they nonetheless can't buy a home because they lack the funds to make the necessary down payment and closing costs. Fortunately, a number of solutions to this problem exist, one of the most common being: down payment assistance programs.

While sellers are forbidden from giving gifts of down payment funds to their potential homebuyers directly, these downpayment assistance programs guarantee that funds to financially-challenged potential homebuyers are delivered at closing to cover all or a portion of the downpayment and closing costs.

Only certain sellers will participate in these programs, and it can often take a great deal of work, mandatory classes, and extra paperwork to accomplish. The upside is that not only can people afford homes who otherwise couldn't, but they might even get a lower interest rate on their loan.

First the seller would enroll the home in a relevant program, contributing funds equal to the amount of downpayment assistance the buyer is to receive at the time closing, plus a fee of around 0.75% of the purchase price of the home. Then, upon closing, the down payment is then wired from the program to the agent handling the closing, keeping the seller removed from the process of transferring those funds.

Sellers can also help reduce the cost burden on buyers by offering to pay all or portions of the closing costs involved in the sale of the home. They do this by simply giving back to a part of their proceeds to the buyer at the time of closing. There are limits, however, on how much assistance a seller may provide, depending on the kind of loan the buyer is obtaining.

And though down payment assistance may seem undesirable to sellers considering whether or not to accept someone's offer to buy their home, it could actually be to the seller's advantage every bit as much as the buyer's. This is because a buyer able to afford the closing costs on a home can more easily get away with making a lower offer (and having it accepted), whereas a buyer requiring down payment assistance is more likely to make an offer closer to the seller's asking price in order to compensate for their need for down payment assistance.

Realtors and lenders both are qualified to aid would-be homebuyers in finding and selecting the right down payment assistance program. Realtors and lenders alike are generally more than glad to explain how an offer to purchase property should be phrased in order to ensure the inclusion of down payment assistance in the offer still allows it to comply with underwriting guidelines.

Many down payment assistance programs are offered by state and local government agencies, aware that it can be difficult for a first-time homebuyer on a limited income to secure a home loan. And despite the popular misconception, these programs are not at all a kind of welfare.

It may surprise you to discover how high of an income level a person may have and still qualify for these down payment assistance programs. This is particularly true if the primary borrower has dependents, like children. Most of these down payment assistance programs have limits on how high a purchase price participants can pay for a home, adjusted based on the applicant's qualifying income level