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Down Payment Assistance

The Down Payment Assistance Program helps families with the upfront costs of buying a home.

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Learn How Down Payment Assistance Works



Program Overview

The Down Payment Assistance Program (DPA) helps families with upfront costs of buying a home. CHA residents are eligible for a \$20,000 grant. However, CHA residents who receive a grant will be transitioned off of their subsidy. If you are not a CHA resident, but are an Illinois resident or moving to Chicago, you are eligible for a \$10,000 grant. ([Download a summary flier.](#))

You can use DPA funds for your down payment, to reduce the loan amount, or to cover closing costs. You can also combine CHA funds with other down payment help, but you can't get cash back when you close on the home. The grant will be forgiven after 10 years of living in the home.

[CHA's Home Ownership Made Easy \(HOME\) Comparison Chart](#) - Compare the [Choose to Own \(CTO\)](#) and Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs.

Eligibility for the Program

Are You Eligible for the Down Payment Assistance Program?

- First-Time Homebuyer: You must not have owned a home in the last three years.
- Income Requirements: You must meet certain [income requirements](#).

- **Property Location:** You must be buying a home within the City of Chicago that will be your permanent residence.
- **Homebuyer Education:** All household members listed on purchase contract must complete an eight-hour Homebuyer Education (HBE) class from [a HUD-approved provider](#).
- **Preapproval:** You need a valid preapproval from one of our [approved lenders](#).
- **Purchase Agreement:** Provide proof that you have a signed purchase agreement for the home you want to buy.
- **Contribution:** You must contribute at least \$3,000 to the purchase. If you receive Social Security income, the required amount is \$2,000. Asset contribution examples include proof of paid earnest money, appraisal, home inspection, cash to close, etc. (not required for VA loans).

[Please click here to view the full eligibility guidelines](#)

Getting Started on Your Homeownership Journey

1. Find Your Home

Review the eligibility requirements on this page. If this program seems like a good fit for you:

- Apply for a home loan with one of [CHA's approved lenders](#)
- Shop for a home with a realtor and submit an offer on a property
- After the seller accepts and signs your offer, that document will become your purchase agreement
- Once you have your completed purchase agreement, contact your lender to let them know you're ready to complete the prescreen and apply for the CHA DPA grant

2. Attend an Orientation

After you've found your home, you must attend an orientation session to move forward with CHA DPA grant application process.

[Sign up for an orientation session](#)

3. Complete Prescreen to Determine Eligibility

Complete the prescreen questionnaire to determine your eligibility for the DPA grant. DPA staff will provide you the prescreen link during your orientation.

4. Complete Application

If you are qualified to apply for the DPA grant, the website will direct you to the application.

5. Upload Documents

After you complete the application, NHS will immediately send an email with instructions on how to log into their secured client portal and upload required documents. You will need to submit documentation of the following:

- Working income and/or disability or retirement income
- Statement showing required assets (\$3000 in cash or \$2000 in social security benefits)
- Preapproval from a mortgage lender on our approved list
- Executed purchase agreement
- Current United States government issued ID for all buyers listed on the purchase agreement
- Lender Documents

ALL required documents will need to be uploaded within 48 hours, then NHS will begin processing application.

For more details on required documents, [click here](#).

6. Wait to Hear the Status of Your Application

There is a two-step approval process:

1. After completing your application and uploading your documents, NHS will email you their determination letter of conditional approval. If denied, the determination letter will list reasons for denial.
2. Once NHS has reviewed all documentation, they will issue a final approval letter.

Please allow an estimated 25 to 30 business days for processing.

Orientation Sessions

If you are interested in learning or want to see if you qualify, please register for an orientation session below. Attending a DPA orientation session is required to apply for the grant.

Virtual Orientation

To join the virtual session, you'll need to download Zoom. It's free to download, and you can find tutorials on how to use it [here](#).

[July 22, 2025 2PM](#) [Aug 5, 2025 2PM](#) [Aug 19, 2025 2PM](#)

Virtual Orientation

To join the virtual session, you'll need to download Zoom. It's free to download, and you can find tutorials on how to use it [here](#).

[Sept 2, 2025 2PM](#) [Sept 16, 2025 2PM](#) [Sept 30, 2025 2PM](#)

Additional Resources

- [Y2025 DPA Eligibility Flyer](#)
- [Y2025 DPA Eligibility Flyer - Spanish](#)
- [CHA's HOME Comparison Chart](#)
- [CHA's HOME Comparison Chart - Spanish](#)

Contact Us

Email: dpaprogram@thecha.org

Phone: 312-935-2600

Similar programs you may be eligible for



Choose to Own

CHA's Choose to Own Homeownership Program (CTO) allows qualifying Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Public Housing families to use their housing subsidy to purchase a home.