

State offers \$150 million to buy, build or rehab affordable homes for Ohioans

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Applications open next month for a new program designed to build or repurpose more affordable housing units in the state.

Over the next two years, developers statewide can tap into \$150 million to deliver a projected 2,150 affordable, single-family living units to the market. Those must be sold for \$180,000 or less to modest earners who agree to live there and not rent or sell the home for at least five years.

Gov. Mike DeWine, who lobbied for this and other affordable housing policies in the state budget, released the [program guidelines](#) for the grants and tax credits Tuesday. The money goes toward single-family homes including houses, single units of a duplex or triplex or fourplex, townhouses, condos, and others. It can't go to build apartments or mobile home units.

Under the "Welcome Home Ohio" program, land banks can get grants to buy outright, rehabilitate or build new units. They and nonprofit developers can also get tax credits for building or rehabilitating units.

The grants to buy homes off the market are unlimited in size and capped at \$30,000 for rehabilitation or construction. The tax credits are capped at \$90,000.

The end buyers of these homes cannot earn more than 80% of the annual median income. For a family of four in Cuyahoga County, that's about \$72,300, [per federal data](#). While the buyers can sell after five years, the same terms would apply to the new buyers. This would apply for 20 years for any unit that was the subject of a grant or credit.

Land banks are nonprofits that exist to buy and sell properties, usually on behalf of counties. But rather than profiteering, they flip houses with the aims of reducing blight or restoring neighborhoods. Sixty-seven of Ohio's 88 counties have land banks, [according to the Ohio Land Bank Association](#).

The Welcome Home program is one of a handful that passed in the state budget with the goal of building more places to live for modest to low earners. That includes a [\\$100 million low-income housing tax credit](#) for those who build more rental units and \$50 million in single-family tax credits for those who build more homes, together estimated to create about 4,000 units.

Together, they could begin to chip away at what's known as the "[housing gap](#)" – the difference between the number of low-income earners in Ohio and the available units they can conceivably afford. Rising rents, sluggish home building, and other macroeconomic trends have left only 80 housing units available for every 100 Ohioans making 50% of the annual median income. That equates to a deficit of about 147,000 homes. For those considered extremely low income, that's 40 homes per every 100, or a 270,000 home deficit.