



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
SOLAR DECATHLON

2011

Building Affordable, Sustainable Housing:

The DC Habitat Model



About DC Habitat

Our Mission

Simply stated, our mission is to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness in the nation's capital by building affordable, energy- and resource-efficient homes for hard-working families in need.



We Are:

- A Construction Company
 - Using staff, AmeriCorps and volunteer labor to build and renovate homes
- A Mortgage Company
 - Providing low and no interest, no-profit mortgages to our homebuyers
- A Social Service Agency
 - Working to identify and serve those who need affordable housing the most



A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out

- Our homes are sold, not given, to approved homeowner applicants, who pay low monthly mortgage payments toward the full ownership of their homes
- Most of our homeowners earn below average incomes and would be ineligible for conventional financing
- Through combo of sponsors' funding and volunteer labor, our homes are built and sold at below market values
- Homeowners contribute approx. 300 hours of 'sweat equity' helping to build their houses and those of their Habitat neighbors
- Owning a DC Habitat home improves quality of life for families, not only physical surroundings, but also by instilling a sense of pride and accomplishment which comes with home ownership.



A Brief History

- DC Habitat founded in 1988
- We have helped house more than 300 families
- Mix of new construction and renovated properties in all four quadrants of the District
- Have partnered with the city in acquiring land on which to build
- Have hosted 2 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Projects with help of volunteers from across the country, most recent was in October 2010
- Over past five years we have worked to ‘green’ building practices, making homes more eco-friendly and more affordable to maintain



How We Work

- We work with the community (referrals from other agencies, DC Habitat homeowners, other partners) to find families in need of affordable housing
- Once a homebuyer is accepted into our program, we offer them low-interest first mortgages and no-interest gap financing to help them purchase a home
- The homebuyers contributes their own 'sweat equity' towards the building of their home
- Mortgage payments on completed homes are reinvested into a revolving fund that helps us acquire more land and build more homes



Neighborhood Revitalization

- Focus now is on full neighborhood revitalization
- Currently building new homes & rehabbing abandoned/foreclosed properties
- Looking to begin home renovation and weatherization program-to help serve existing homeowners in same communities where we are building
- Working on all 3 fronts helps to enhance distressed neighborhoods, keep all homes energy efficient and affordable to maintain, and eventually raise property values
- Some of our funding comes from HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) in partnership with city government



Where We are Building Now

- Currently building in Ivy City, a largely industrial neighborhood in the central portion of Northeast DC
- We are one of 3 non-profit developers awarded land grants from the city and NSP funds to build more than 50 affordable units total in the community
- Building a mix of new homes and rehabs
- The 8 homes of phase I are complete and we are now working on phase II of the development
- We are also partnering on the construction of 2 passive homes in Deanwood, Northeast DC, as part of Solar Decathlon



Homeownership Opportunities

What are the homes like and how does a prospective buyer apply to the program?



Homeownership Opportunities

- 20+ homes to be built and rehabilitated by DC Habitat in the next two years.
- Ivy City Development:
 - Properties on Central Place, Corcoran Street, Capitol Street & Providence Street Northeast
 - Mix of new construction and rehabs
 - 2 and 3-bedroom units



Homeownership Opportunities

Empowerhouse Project:

- Two-family “passive house” at 46th Street and Gault Place Northeast (Deanwood)
- 1,400 square foot units
- Three bedrooms plus two baths



Who Can Apply?

Habitat evaluates applications on three basic criteria:

- 1) **Need**
 - 2) **Ability to pay**
 - 3) **Willingness to partner**
- **Need:** Current housing issues may relate to overcrowding; heating, electrical, plumbing or structural deficiencies; or severe rent burden.



Who Can Apply?

- **Ability to Pay**

- Income must be consistent and verifiable and fall within guidelines
- Income must be sufficient to cover all recurring debts (including payments on credit cards, student loans and car notes) and the expected house payment without burden
- Eligible income includes wages from employment*, SSI, disability, child support, etc. (**Must have a minimum of two years' consecutive job history for income to be considered.*)
- Must apply for and secure a second trust loan through the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) – a program administered by the Greater Washington Urban League. Applicants can receive up to \$44,000 in down payment and closing costs assistance.



Who Can Apply?

- **Ability to Pay – Must have decent credit**
 - A minimum median credit score of 600 is required.
 - Unpaid collection accounts or charge-offs may not total more than \$1,000.
 - Judgments and liens must be resolved before applying.
 - Bankruptcies must have been discharged for a minimum of five years.



Who Can Apply?

Ability to Pay – Income Guidelines

Applicant must earn no less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) and no more than 80 percent AMI

For example, a family of four should earn:

-Between \$31,850 and \$67,600 **gross annually**

Or

-Between \$2,654 and \$5,633 **gross monthly**



Who Can Apply?

- **Willingness to Partner**

- Must earn 200-350 hours* of “sweat equity” toward the construction or rehabilitation of HFHDC homes – own home or homes of neighbors (* A *certain percentage of construction sweat equity hours may be contributed by friends and family working alongside partner family*)
- Completion of homeownership education training.
- Attendance at Habitat information sessions or special events.
- Must commit to maintaining the house after move-in with the understanding that all necessary upkeep and repairs are the new homeowner’s responsibility



Who Can Apply?

Additional Criteria

- Be U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident.
- Be first time homebuyer.
- Currently reside in the District of Columbia.



How to Apply

- Attend Orientation Session
 - Scheduling information is on our online calendar at dchabitat.org.
- Eligibility Assessment
 - Habitat estimates buyer readiness and reviews credit history.
- Application Interview
 - Creditworthy candidates present documentation of income, rental history, & assets.
- Family Support Committee (FSC) Interview
 - Applicants that demonstrate ability to pay are interviewed by a team of two members of the volunteer committee. FSC recommends most qualified candidates for final approval.



The 'Greening' of DC Habitat Homes

How do we keep our homes efficient and affordable for our homeowners to maintain?

The “Greening” of DC Habitat Homes

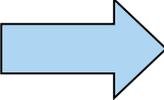
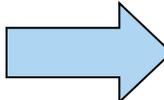
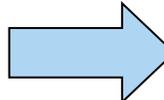
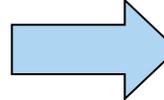
Since 2009, we have built 22 “green” homes focusing on 4 concepts:

1. Energy Efficiency
2. Resource Efficiency
3. Sustainability of materials, construction methods and neighborhoods
4. Accountability through green building programs such as Energy Star, EarthCraft Homes VA, Green Communities, and LEED

How are DC Habitat homes **energy** efficient ?

- Meet Energy Star standards for windows, appliances, lighting fixtures, water heaters and furnaces.
 - ➔ Reduces energy load of the home by 15% compared to a typical home built to code.
- Improved framing techniques and increased insulation in exterior walls that create a tight house envelope.
 - ➔ Reduces heat and moisture transfer from the exterior conditions allowing the HVAC system to be more efficient.

How are DC Habitat homes *resource* efficient ?

- Low flow water fixtures and toilets.
 -  reduces domestic water use.
- Storm water prevention measures such as rain gardens and other low impact landscape designs.
 -  reduces water used for irrigation.
- Recycled and environmentally friendly materials used when possible.
 -  reduces carbon footprint and waste sent to landfills.
- 63% of construction waste is recycled.
 -  diverts waste from landfills.

Why are DC Habitat homes more sustainable?

- Implementing a compact design that minimizes the house's footprint on its local environment and is connected to the surrounding community via public transportation, bike paths and parks.
 - ➡ creates sustainable neighborhoods.
- Intentionally using resilient materials and implementing building techniques that enhance the durability of the home.
 - ➡ better built homes have a longer life with less problems.
- Enhancing indoor air quality through use of low-VOC caulks, sealants, carpeting and interior paint.
 - ➡ healthier homes lead to healthier families.
- Adding outside air source to the HVAC system to cycle fresh air.
 - ➡ healthier homes lead to healthier families.



The 'Greening' of DC Habitat Homes

**Keeping Homes Energy and Resource
Efficient Also Keeps them more
affordable!**



THANK YOU!

