

# Program Overview & Eligibility



## Housing Counseling

Housing counselors are dedicated, knowledgeable, and experienced professionals who are certified and specialized in helping homeowners in various stages of the housing experience. You can meet one on one with a free housing counselor to discuss your personal situation and your loss mitigation options (steps to avoid disclosure). The counselor also can advocate on your behalf with a mortgage servicer. Visit <https://bit.ly/orhousingcounseling> to connect with a counselor today.

## Legal Assistance

The Oregon Homeowner Legal Assistance (OHLA) project provides free or reduced-cost legal services to eligible low- and moderate-income Oregonians whose homeownership is at risk due to foreclosure. Homeowners can apply to determine eligibility for legal assistance by calling the toll-free OHLA intake line at 855-503-2598. If OHLA cannot assist, it can refer knowledgeable attorneys to help.

## For More Information or to Apply Online

If you have questions, need help with your application, or want to apply, please visit [www.OregonHomeownerAssistance.org](http://www.OregonHomeownerAssistance.org) or contact the HAF team:

**Oregon Housing and Community Services**

**Phone:** 833-604-0879

**E-mail:** [Support@ohcshafsupport.zendesk.com](mailto:Support@ohcshafsupport.zendesk.com)

**Hours:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Program Overview

The Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) helps homeowners who are in a difficult financial situation due to the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Oregon received \$90 million to help eligible homeowners avoid mortgage foreclosures and displacement, and to cure delinquencies and defaults. The HAF program can help homeowners with traditional mortgages and escrow costs, closed home equity lines of credit, ITIN loans, reverse mortgages, chattel loans (secured to manufactured homes), land sale contracts, property taxes that are at least two years delinquent, HOA or condo dues, and lot rent or land lease charges.

## Past-Due Payment Relief

Past-Due Payment Relief provides eligible **low- and medium-income homeowners** (150% AMI or below) with up to **\$50,000** to pay off past-due balances for eligible housing costs.

## Ongoing Payment Relief

Ongoing Payment Relief provides eligible **low-income homeowners** (100% AMI or below) with money to cover all or some of their monthly mortgage payments and housing costs going forward for up to six months, not to exceed \$10,000 per household. Please note that OHCS will not provide ongoing payment assistance for county property taxes or homeowner's insurance unless those costs are included in the monthly mortgage payment amount.

## Type of Assistance

For approved applications, OHCS will make payments directly to the servicer, county, HOA, or other housing entity. Assistance is in the form of a five-year, no-interest, forgivable loan. The loan is recorded as a second mortgage/lien of up to \$60,000 on your property with the county or, if determined by OHCS, as a security interest on your home. For most homeowners, the entire loan is forgiven after five years. If you sell your home or refinance it for cash within five years, you have to repay the portion of the loan that has not yet been forgiven.





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## Program Eligibility

At this time, HAF helps homeowners who are most at risk of foreclosure and housing displacement, socially disadvantaged individuals (as defined by U.S. Treasury), or otherwise meet one of the additional eligibility criteria below.

### General Eligibility Criteria

In order to apply, homeowners must meet the general eligibility requirements listed below:

1. You're living at the property as your primary residence. An exception may apply if you were displaced by a state-recognized natural disaster or a casualty loss (sudden or unexpected event, like a fire) and plan to return to the property.
  2. The property is a one- to four-unit residential property, condominium, manufactured home, or floating home.
  3. You're listed as a borrower on the mortgage or are the owner of the property.
  4. You experienced financial hardship (either a reduction in income or increase in living expenses) due to the coronavirus pandemic after Jan. 21, 2020.
  5. Your original mortgage principal balance must be at or below the Federal Housing Finance Agency conforming loan limits (<https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools/Downloads/Pages/Conforming-Loan-Limit.aspx>) in place on the date you entered into your mortgage.
  6. Your mortgage cannot be an open home equity line of credit (HELOC). OHCS will verify that any line of credit is closed.
  7. If you have a mortgage, your mortgage servicer must be enrolled in the OHCS Homeowner Assistance Fund program. To confirm if your mortgage servicer or housing expense entity has been enrolled in the program, view our list of participating servicers: <https://bit.ly/hafservicers>. OHCS will only request to enroll your mortgage servicer twice.
  8. If you're behind on your housing costs, you don't have enough liquid assets to pay the past-due amounts and bring your housing costs current. If you're current on your housing costs, you don't have more than three months of housing cost payments saved as liquid assets. Liquid assets include all cash, bank accounts, and investment accounts, excluding retirement accounts and 529 college plans.
- 9. For Past-Due Payment Relief:**
- You're behind on your housing payments. If you're seeking assistance with just your county property taxes, you must be at least two years past due on your property tax payments.
  - The total post-due amount on your mortgage or other housing cost must be less than \$50,000 at the time your application meets the minimum requirements and is submitted for processing. If you owe more than \$50,000, as determined by OHCS, your servicer or housing cost provider, your application will be denied.
  - You must be at or below 150% area median income (AMI) or 100% of the median income for the United States, whichever is greater (<https://bit.ly/HAFAMICChart>).
  - You must be able to afford your housing costs. Your housing expense to gross monthly income ratio must be 43% or less. If your monthly housing costs are \$860 and your income is \$2,000, your ratio is 43% ( $\$860/\$2,000=0.43$ ).
- 10. For Ongoing Payment Relief:**
- Homeowners must be at or below 100% AMI or 100% of the U.S. median income, whichever is greater.

**Note:** OHCS does not provide assistance for homeowner's insurance unless that cost is part of your escrow charges in your monthly mortgage payment.

### Additional Eligibility Criteria

- Homeowners who are in active foreclosure (sheriff's sale date, judicial case, notice of default with sale date).
- Homeowners who received a certificate of compliance from the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance program. The certificate allows the servicer or beneficiary to initiate a foreclosure within one year.
- Homeowners who are in the property tax redemption period. The redemption period is the amount of time allowed to pay off back taxes, plus interest and fees, after the homeowner's county completed a tax lien foreclosure.
- Homeowners traditionally underserved or who are less able to recover, including those who are: elderly (62+), living with a disability (with proof of SSDI, SSI, or other government-awarded disability benefits), rural, Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, and Pacific Islander households, and members of federally recognized Tribes, limited English proficiency, residents of a majority-minority Census tract (ZIP Codes 97266, 97229 and 97761), or displaced due to property destruction from a state-recognized natural disaster.

Visit the HAF website, [www.OregonHomeownerAssistance.org](http://www.OregonHomeownerAssistance.org), for the most up-to-date eligibility and application information.