



Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative

Tom Corbett, Governor
Brian A. Hudson, Sr., Executive Director

The Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative encourages high-quality homebuyer educational and counseling services, especially for families who have few options in housing choice. Making clear, consistent information widely available statewide creates knowledgeable consumers. Providing opportunities for education and counseling within a framework of uniformity and standardization has been vital to the success of this effort. PHFA will continue to encourage the participation of Counseling Network organizations that have a strong local presence.

Brian A. Hudson, Sr.
*PHFA Executive Director
& Chief Executive Officer*



Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative

PHFA's Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative (CHCI) trains and certifies organizations to provide homebuyer workshops, pre-settlement counseling, and pre-purchase counseling to help prospective homeowners throughout Pennsylvania. Offerings include education about homeownership, budgeting, credit, financial and technical assistance, property inspections, rehabilitation, and maintenance. These valuable services have a significant positive impact on consumers in communities across the Commonwealth. More than 100 separate organizations comprise the Counseling Network.

The CHCI Network

PHFA's Counseling Network includes both traditional community-based groups and faith-based organizations dealing with urban and rural issues. This network handles the Agency's primary consumer outreach effort, which was developed with a number of specific goals that include the following:

- To improve consumer access to affordable housing.

- To develop appropriate opportunities for homeownership.
- To educate consumers about how to avoid predatory lending.
- To help borrowers maintain successful homeownership.
- To help consumers negotiate loss-mitigation solutions with lenders.



Training and Certification

To assure consumers that they receive relevant, professional guidance, organizations participating in the Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative are required to be trained and certified by PHFA. Participating Counseling Network agencies are compensated for their outreach efforts and also may be eligible for additional funding that is made available by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and PHFA.

Counseling Services

The CHCI plan features several services:

Pre-purchase counseling prepares families for the responsibility of homeownership through a series of classroom and individual sessions. Topics such as financial planning, creditworthiness, money management, maintenance, and home repairs are emphasized. Clients learn about finding the best mortgage loan opportunities, the importance of good credit, various types of mortgage insurance or loan guarantees, fair housing, responsibilities of real estate professionals in finding a good home, and lead paint hazards and remediation. This training is to help prospective homebuyers make wise choices.

Pre-closing counseling outlines the overall prospective of buying and owning a home. During two-hour classroom sessions, counselors offer consumers information about improving money management and budgeting skills, the mortgage application and loan closing process, and how to prevent mortgage delinquencies and default. Pre-closing counseling is for



those who have been referred by PHFA participating lenders.



One-on-one counseling assesses client family housing needs, determines their eligibility for various homeownership programs, provides financial planning help and credit awareness information, and conducts affordability analyses to help those using the service pre-qualify for mortgage loans and plan for home purchasing.

Anti-predatory lending and foreclosure prevention counseling helps prospective buyers identify predatory lending tactics and elements, outlines the general characteristics of victims of predatory lending, offers guidance about how to avoid situations that allow predatory lenders access, presents alternatives to foreclosure, and makes homeowners aware of important points to remember when dealing with mortgage delinquencies.

Default and delinquency counseling is especially designed for individuals who are late on mortgage payments but who want to remain homeowners. This measure focuses on improving budgeting and money-management skills, the importance of saving, and examines ways to repair damaged credit. Homeowners' Emergency Mortgage Assistance or other loss-mitigation programs are considered for those who are facing foreclosure.

Counseling agencies considering becoming part of the Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Network should call 717.780.3832 or visit the PHFA Web site, www.phfa.org.



PHFA

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

211 North Front Street

Harrisburg, PA 17101

717.780.3800 or 1.800.822.1174

TTY 717.780.1869

www.phfa.org

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its housing programs and employment without regard to age, disability, family status, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, or religion.