

# HOUSING COUNSELING AND EDUCATION



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our ongoing partnership with housing counseling agencies across Pennsylvania ensures the convenient availability of high-quality housing counseling services for both homebuyers and homeowners. Making clear, accurate housing and budgeting information widely available to Pennsylvanians creates knowledgeable consumers who make smart housing choices. If you have housing questions, let us put you in contact with an expert housing counselor located near you.



Robin Wiessmann  
PHFA Executive Director & CEO

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency's Comprehensive Housing Counseling Initiative has been in operation since 1998. It provides consumers with the tools and information to make better-informed housing decisions. To achieve these objectives, PHFA has developed a statewide network of trained and certified housing counseling specialists who educate consumers on a variety of topics through:

- ▶ financial education
- ▶ homebuyer workshops
- ▶ pre-purchase and pre-closing counseling
- ▶ foreclosure prevention counseling
- ▶ anti-predatory lending workshops

## FOR HOMEBUYERS

Owning a home is part of the American dream. But the purchase process requires extensive preparation and big decisions. To help you understand the process of purchasing a home, PHFA-certified housing counseling specialists provide

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**ON THE COVER:** Working with housing counselor Rita Masi (right), Katherine Stone secured a mortgage modification to save her home from foreclosure. Also pictured is Katherine's friend Troy Barren.

both one-on-one counseling and group workshops. Housing counselors can help you:

- ▶ identify your housing needs
- ▶ determine the home price range that you can comfortably afford
- ▶ decide on an appropriate mortgage loan
- ▶ anticipate homeownership-related financial demands
- ▶ improve your financial knowledge
- ▶ understand your creditworthiness

Additionally, counselors can help you better understand:

- ▶ the role of real estate agents
- ▶ how to best negotiate an offer for a home
- ▶ the mortgage application and approval process
- ▶ the importance of a home inspection
- ▶ the process of closing on a home loan
- ▶ the responsibilities that come with homeownership

## FOR HOMEOWNERS

Managing mortgage payments, home maintenance and repairs, utility bills and other financial responsibilities can be a challenge for any homeowner. Add an unanticipated family, job or health crisis, and falling behind on monthly payments can happen quickly. PHFA's counseling network offers mortgage delinquency and foreclosure prevention counseling, as well as educational programs, to help homeowners get back on track with their mortgage payments. One-on-one counseling and workshops are available to help you work through your options.



Financial education sessions are one benefit of PHFA's statewide counseling network. These sessions help potential homebuyers and current homeowners learn what's needed financially to achieve and maintain homeownership.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED?

For more information about housing counseling services, or to find a counseling agency in your area, please visit [www.PHFA.org](http://www.PHFA.org) and select the “Homebuyer” menu. The Quick Response Code below will take you to our homepage. You can also reach us toll-free Monday-Friday (8 a.m.- 5 p.m.) at 1.855.827.3466.

## ABOUT THE COUNSELING NETWORK

Agencies that are a part of PHFA’s counseling network are located across the Commonwealth and have counselors familiar with housing opportunities in your community. These counselors are trained and certified by PHFA, and they are required to pursue continuing-education opportunities. Organizations that want to become part of PHFA’s counseling network should call 1.800.635.4747.

## ABOUT PHFA

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency works to provide affordable homeownership and rental housing options for older adults, low- and moderate-income families, and people with special housing needs. Through its carefully managed mortgage programs and investments in multifamily housing developments, PHFA also promotes economic development across the state. PHFA programs and operations are funded primarily by the sale of securities and from fees paid by program users, not by public tax dollars. The agency is governed by a 14-member board.



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The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is committed to the policy that all people 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.

