

Habitat for Humanity Southeast BC builds entry-level homes and sells them at fair market value to families who qualify for our Homeownership Program. The homes are made affordable through Habitat Southeast BC's special mortgage terms that include:

- Fair mortgage terms
- Monthly payments set to be 30% of the gross household income of all adults living in the home

Only a handful of opportunities exist each year and, as a result, the eligibility criteria are important. This also means that **although you may meet the criteria, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to offer you a home.**

Application Criteria:

Habitat Southeast BC assesses each application for the Homeownership Program based on three main pillars:

1. Need for decent, affordable housing
2. Ability to pay for and maintain a home
3. Willingness to partner with Habitat Southeast BC and support Habitat's objectives

Other requirements are:

- Habitat for Humanity Southeast BC focuses its efforts on families in our region with young children, providing the family a safe, stable environment in which to grow and flourish. Applicants must have at least one child aged 16 or under living in the home, or a fully-dependent adult child.
- **Applicants must have three (3) years permanent residence in Canada**



1. Housing Need

Families living in substandard housing may receive preference. Some factors that are considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Poor structural conditions such as wiring, ventilation, heating, or bathroom facilities
- Medical disabilities and general health conditions are stressed by current housing
- The location of your housing is not accessible to schools, shopping, and transportation in a safe community
- Overcrowding for the number of people in home
- Percentage of income currently spent on housing is deemed too high
- Families currently living in subsidized housing are also eligible to apply

2. Ability to Pay

Applicants must be capable and willing to pay the mortgage, applicable insurance and strata fees, and other fees associated with home ownership.

Families need to demonstrate their ability to pay an affordable mortgage and sound financial management, including:

- Stable employment income
- Responsible debt management
- Fair or better credit report on Equifax Credit
- Any bankruptcy or consumer proposal must have been discharged for at least three (3) years
- The family's Gross Household Income must be sufficient to cover the cost of homeownership for the specific project
- Applicants and co-applicants will be asked to submit several documents to support financial status, including but not limited to current employment proof, debt statements, a current credit report and asset statements.

We also look at your total debt servicing ratio and take into consideration the amount of your short term and long-term debt. You must provide a credit check and score as part of this process and, if you previously declared bankruptcy or had a consumer proposal, you must have been discharged for at least three (3) years.

Habitat will request employer and other references, supporting financial documentation, and income verification.

Income requirements and housing size:

Matching families to available homes is one of the challenges of our program. Our charitable status requires that we serve low-moderate income families currently living in our community. We also look at the make-up of the family to determine the number of bedrooms required using the following criteria:

- Children must have a separate bedroom from adults
- A maximum of two (2) children may share a single bedroom
- Children sharing a bedroom must be the same gender

3. Willingness to Partner

The applicants must be willing and able to partner with Habitat Southeast BC and assist in the advancement of the mission and values of Habitat for Humanity.

- **Housing for All** - Access to safe, decent and affordable housing is a basic human right that should be available to everyone
- **Home Dignity** - We believe in the worth and dignity of every human being. We respect the people we serve and those who help us in this effort, as people are our greatest resource
- **Partnership** - We can best achieve our mission through meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships with others
- **Diversity and Inclusiveness** - There is a role for everyone committed to our vision, our mission and values. We seek to enrich our organization through diversity

When a family is approved for the Homeownership Program, they become a "prospective homeowner". **Families must agree to and complete 500 volunteer hours, called "Service Hours", prior to purchasing their home.** Volunteer hours must be spent assisting in the construction of Habitat Southeast BC homes, at the ReStore, or at Habitat Southeast BC special events. Relatives and friends may also help by contributing a limited number of volunteer hours.

Prospective homeowners also agree to act as "ambassadors" of the organization and may be asked to speak to the press, attend public events related to the build or a Habitat Southeast BC activity and agree to be photographed for promotional material.

The family must agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and criteria as established by Habitat Southeast BC in accordance with Habitat for Humanity Canada and Canada Revenue Agency regulations. Habitat Southeast BC does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, colour, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or source of income. Because of this, future homeowners must be willing to live as respectful neighbours in a complex with families from a variety of socio-economic, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

Applicant families must understand the type of homes Habitat Southeast BC builds and appreciate how the community has come together to build their future home.

The Application and Review Process

Once your inquiry is received it will be reviewed to determine whether you meet the initial criteria. If approved, you will be invited to complete the long-form application. This is a comprehensive document that will enable us to gather very detailed information about your family's current situation. Information required includes but is not limited to:

- Employment history and a credit reference request and score, with supporting documents, for each applicant
- A photograph of the applicant family
- A family story, outlining your background and why you think you would qualify for a home through Habitat Southeast BC's Homeownership Program
- References from your employer, landlord, a professional in the community, and a personal reference

Please note that being able to assess your current living and financial situation is critical to our ability to determine whether you meet the necessary criteria to qualify as a future homeowner. At times, the application process and information required will feel very personal, because we request financial and other specific information. Please be assured that all your information will be kept in strict confidence, as this is a required and necessary part of a homeownership partnership process.

Once we have received your completed application, it enters the application review process. This review has several steps, including verification of your information, meeting with the Family Services department, and interviews with members of the Family Selection committee.

As you can imagine, defining 'need' can be difficult and may be subjective. If your family meets the financial criteria, then members of the Family Selection committee will meet with your family to gain a better understanding of your living situation and determine the level of need, as well as determine your willingness to partner with Habitat Southeast BC. Typically, at least two (2) members of the committee will meet with you and your family for a home visit of approximately one (1) hour to discuss your situation and to answer any questions you may have about the program. To create a mutual context of understanding of home partnership, there may be up to three (3) home visits by different committee members.

Successful interview applicants will be recommended to the board of directors for approval as a Habitat of Humanity Southeast BC prospective homeowner. Once approved at the board level, the family will be invited to partner with Habitat Southeast BC. If a Habitat home is not immediately available, relevant documentation will be completed and signed as the process moves forward. At this time, the family will be also encouraged to begin their volunteer contribution of 500 service hours within the partnership program.

During the application process, you may be contacted at several points; for example,

- To inform you that your family does not currently meet our criteria. This will complete the application process. If information should change at any time, please initiate the process again
- To gather more information, or to clarify some of your responses
- To invite you to meet with the family services department
- To inform you of the outcome at each stage of the interview process, and that you will either be moving forward, or that your application has been declined
- To inform you that your application is being recommended for approval by the board of directors

This application process is dependant on timely submission of information from applicants.

Before you apply:

Purchasing a home is, for most people, the single largest financial purchase they will make in their lives. It is a very exciting prospect, but it may also create stress and anxiety. Home ownership comes with many financial obligations that don't exist when you are a renter (such as property taxes, legal fees, strata fees, home maintenance, house insurance, etc.). It is important to take these factors into consideration when determining whether you and your family are ready to take this step. Please ask questions at any time.

If you feel that your family meets the criteria for Habitat Southeast BC homeownership program please request a long-form application, and return the fully completed form, including required documents, via email to familyservices@fhfsebc.ca. **Incomplete applications, including all requested supporting documents, will not be considered.**

Our homeownership department is available by telephone at (778) 755-4346 extension 207, or email familyservices@fhfsebc.ca should you have any questions.

Thank you for your interest in Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Program.