

Essex County Habitat for Humanity will use the selection criteria outlined below to determine eligibility for homeownership. All applicant families are required to be legal residents or citizens in status and have two years of taxable income reported.

Criteria 1: Need for Adequate Shelter

Applicants must demonstrate a need for housing. Consideration will be given for the following circumstances and conditions:

- Substandard Housing - If there are problems with the heating system, water supply, electricity, bathrooms, kitchen, structure, etc. of your current home.
- Applicant pays more than 40% of income on rent.
- Overcrowding - If the number of bedrooms is inadequate as determined by the number, ages, and sex of household members.
- Economic Disadvantage - The family must be unable to obtain a conventional or government-assisted mortgage loan to purchase a home.

Criteria 2: Income and Ability to Pay

The family income must be adequate to cover monthly housing costs of approximately \$1,500 – \$2,100 (amounts subject to change):

- Up to \$245,000 affordable 30 year mortgage.
- Total monthly housing payment is approximately \$1,500 – \$2,100 (mortgage and escrow, which includes taxes, insurance, and HOA fees for short and long-term maintenance costs for common areas.)
- Homeowner pays utilities, water, and sewer.
- An applicant's total annual family income must be no higher than 60% of the area median income. For a family of four, that falls between \$80,400 and \$97,920 depending on location.
- If applicants have declared bankruptcy, they must wait five years after being discharged and also must re-establish good credit to apply for a Habitat home.
- Eligible households shall have total gross assets of no more than \$75,000.

Criteria 3: Willingness to Partner

The family must demonstrate a willingness to participate as a partner with Habitat. Prospective homeowners must demonstrate a commitment to their home and community, as well as to Habitat. These criteria will be determined by interviewing the applicant families and their references. If selected as a Habitat homeowner, the family will be required to:

- Commit applicants and all adult family members, in writing, to work between 240 and 360 hours (in total) with Habitat for Humanity while their home is under construction.
- Pay the mortgage on time so that more homes can be built (this will be determined by obtaining a credit report).
- Maintain the home inside and out, including doing the necessary landscaping and cleaning of common areas.