

**City of Linwood  
New Jersey**

**Affordability Assistance  
Program Manual**

In Accordance with the  
Uniform Housing Affordability Controls

**March 2026**

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Manual is to describe the policies and procedures of the Affordability Assistance Program. This Manual describes the basic content and operation of the various affordable assistance program components.

**In accordance with the Fair Housing Act Adopted New Rules: N.J.A.C. 5:99 - 2.5**, a municipality shall set aside a portion of its affordable housing trust fund for the purpose of providing affordability assistance to low- and moderate-income households in affordable units included in a municipal fair share plan, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:99-2.5. Affordability assistance means the use of funds to render housing units more affordable to low- and moderate-income households and includes, but is not limited to, down payment assistance, security deposit assistance, low interest loans, rental assistance, assistance with homeowner's association or condominium fees and special assessments, common maintenance expenses, and assistance with emergency repairs and rehabilitation to bring deed-restricted units up to code. N.J.A.C. 5:99-2.5.

## I. TYPES OF AFFORDABILITY ASSISTANCE

The types of affordability assistance offered are listed below. The specifics of each type are summarized in Exhibit 1. No ongoing or monthly assistance options are currently available.

**A. EMERGENCY AND HEALTH/SAFETY REPAIRS** – Affordability Assistance funding is available to assist owners of low-and moderate-units to make emergency and/or health and safety related repairs that they do not have the financial resources to make otherwise. Funding will not be provided for standard maintenance items, work covered by the homeowner association, damage covered by homeowner insurance and/ or minor repairs such as small areas of peeling paint or other items that can be addressed easily by the homeowner. This funding will help preserve the affordable deed restricted housing stock and the residents who reside in the homes. Only units in the Municipality's Fair Share Plan (portfolio of affordable units) are eligible to apply. The maximum combined grant available to any one affordable home will be \$10,000.

**B. ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM (EEP)** - This program makes available zero interest forgivable loans to income-qualified Owners of deed restricted affordable homes in the Municipality. The following Energy Efficiency upgrades/replacements are eligible:

- HVAC or heat pump equipment;
- Hot water heater;
- Windows and doors

The maximum combined grant available to any one affordable home will be \$10,000. By replacing existing heating /cooling (HVAC) systems, windows, doors and/or hot water heaters with new, high

energy efficiency standards, the goal of this program is to save energy and reduce the energy-related costs for low- and moderate-income households, while maintaining a high level of comfort.

- C. CREATE ADDITIONAL VERY LOW-INCOME UNITS** – Affordability assistance may be utilized to create additional very low-income units by converting a moderate or low-income unit into a very low-income unit in new developments. The affordability assistance will result in additional very low-income units beyond what is required by state affordable housing rules. The Municipality may negotiate with developers of inclusionary developments to determine the appropriate amount of subsidy required to make the unit affordable to a very low-income household.
- D. FIRST MONTHS RENT ASSISTANCE (SECURITY DEPOSIT ASSISTANCE)** - This program makes available grants to income-qualified tenants of deed restricted affordable apartments in the Municipality in an amount equal to the amount of rent that the landlord charges for the first month of occupancy. The grant will be available to all new tenants of very low-, low- and moderate- income rental units. The Maximum grant will be \$2,500.00
- E. DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE** - The Municipality Down Payment Assistance Program is designed to help low- and moderate-income households achieve the goal of homeownership. This program will provide a no interest, forgivable loan to homebuyers of deed restricted affordable properties within the Municipality to use as a principal down payment and/or closing costs. The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance to income-qualified homebuyers moving to the Municipality. The maximum grant is \$10,000.00
- F. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** - The Program is designed to help low- and moderate-income homeowners retain stable finances. This program will provide a no interest, forgivable loan to homeowners of deed restricted affordable properties within the Municipality who are in arrears with mortgage payments, taxes, utility payments, special assessments, or homeowners' fees. Funds are made available through the Municipality's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance to income-qualified homeowners. The maximum grant is \$10,000.00.

## ELIGIBILITY

Applications submitted for affordability assistance will be provided on a first come-first-served basis according to the following criteria, as applicable:

1. There are affordability assistance funds remaining in the Housing Trust Fund for the year.
2. The applicant owns a deed restricted affordable unit in the Municipality that they maintain as their primary residence.
3. The applicant rents a deed restricted affordable unit in the Municipality.
4. The applicant has not received an affordability assistance in the past. (Only one award per household is permitted. This requirement can be waived on a case-by-case basis)
5. Applicants applying for repairs will require income certification at the time of application.

6. Applicants applying for repairs, must show proof that property taxes, municipal utilities and, if applicable, mortgage and homeowner association fee are paid current.
7. Applicants applying for repairs must show proof that the needed improvements will remediate a serious threat to the health and/or safety of the building's residents.

## **REPAYMENT TERMS & REPAYMENT AGREEMENT**

When required, loans for properties participating in the Affordability Assistance Program shall be secured through a Mortgage and Mortgage Note in favor of the municipality and executed by the property owner. The Mortgage and Mortgage Note will be executed at closing. The original mortgage note shall be retained by the Municipality Clerk and kept in the unit file. The Administrative Agent will send the affordability assistance Mortgage requiring recording to the Municipality. Upon receipt the Municipality will file said document with the County Clerk's office.

When required, the following is the term of the mortgage:

All loans are zero interest, forgivable loans. If property is sold prior to the fifth year, the loan becomes due upon change in ownership. After the fifth year, the loan shall be forgiven by 20% each year, up to year 10. After year 10, the loan will be completely forgiven. Mortgages, the Control Period and five year time period for the Emergency Repair and Energy Efficiency grants begin on the date all work is completed and approved, and for the Down Payment Assistance and Homeownership Assistance Program the period begins on the date the funds are released.

## **II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The Administrative Agent will be responsible for administering the program. Questions about the Program should be directed the Administrative Agent. All forms are included in the appendices

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### **1. EMERGENCY AND HEALTH/SAFETY REPAIRS PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

- Homeowner submits application for assistance along with proof of work items needed. Refer to section on Requirements of Work Items.
- The Administrative Agent income certifies applicant and confirms property taxes, municipal utilities and, existing mortgage and homeowner association fee are paid current.
- Building inspector visits home to document the need for emergency repair and to prepare the work specifications to be reviewed by the appropriate code official.

- Upon eligibility determination and site visit– the Administrative Agent will send homeowner:
  - ✓ Eligibility letter (including paragraph on municipal contractor payment process to show to the contractor)
  - ✓ Work specifications
  - ✓ Instructions to obtain and provide proposal from 3 contractors (willing to be paid by municipality at job completion). Homeowner to identify contractor selected to do the job and provide that contractor’s business registration, Consumer Affairs home improvement license and certificate of insurance listing program as certificate holder. The homeowner will have to fund any amount over the program funding limit, payable directly to the contractor.
  
- Once homeowner provides the above items, the Administrative Agent will send the homeowner’s certificate of eligibility and contractor selection to the Municipality to pass a resolution authorizing funding assistance. Upon receipt of the approved municipal resolution, provide the homeowner the construction agreement for the homeowner and contractor to sign, as well as program mortgage & note for the homeowner to sign in front of notary and return to program.
  
- The Municipality is not a party to any contract between homeowner and contractor and the Municipality does not ensure that work performed by contractor is completed to satisfaction of homeowner. The construction agreement is between the homeowner and contractor; the Municipality is not a party to the agreement for purposes of any claims by the parties against one another.
  
- Upon construction completion, the homeowner will provide to the Program:
  - ✓ Written homeowner’s approval of satisfactory job completion.
  - ✓ Invoice from contractor identifying the work items they completed.
  - ✓ Copies of municipal permits and closed out permits via municipal Certificate of Approval for the applicable items installed.
  
- If the work does not require a permit, certification of work by the contractor will be accepted.
  
- The Administrative Agent will submit the contractor invoice to the municipality for payment and forward the mortgage to the municipality to file (record) with the county clerk.

### ***Emergency and Health/Safety Repairs Program Eligibility Certification Process***

In order to be eligible for assistance, households in each unit to be assisted must be determined to be income eligible. All adult members, 18 years of age and older, of the household must be fully certified as income-eligible before any assistance will be provided by the Program. The Administrative Agent will income qualify applicants in accordance with the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) at N.J.A.C. 5:80-

16.1 et seq., except for the regional maximum asset limit issued annually in the *Affordable Housing Regional Income Limits by Household Size*.

The following is a list of various types of wages, payments, rebates and credits. Those that are considered as part of the household's income are listed under Income. Those that are not considered as part of the household's income are listed under Not Income.

#### **A. WHAT IS CONSIDERED INCOME**

The following income sources are considered income and will be included in the income eligibility determination:

- Wages, salaries, tips, commissions
- Regularly scheduled overtime
- Unemployment compensation (verify the remaining number of weeks they are eligible to receive)
- Social Security
- Pensions
- Disability
- Alimony
- Verified regular child support (received)
- Interest income from assets such as savings, certificates of deposit, money market accounts, mutual funds, stocks, bonds
- Imputed interest (using a current average annual rate of two percent) from non-income producing assets, such as equity in real estate. Rent from real estate is considered income, after deduction of any mortgage payments, real estate taxes, property owner's insurance.
- TANF (Temporary Assistance For Needy Families)
- Net income from business or real estate
- Rent from real estate is considered income
- Any other forms of regular income reported to the Internal Revenue Service

#### **B. WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED INCOME**

The following income sources are not considered income and will not be included in the income eligibility determination:

- Court ordered payments for alimony or child support paid to another household shall be deducted from gross annual income
- Part-time income of dependents enrolled as full-time students
- Lump-sum additions to assets such as inheritances, lottery winnings, gifts, insurance settlements
- Food stamps
- Rebates or credits received under low-income energy assistance programs
- Payments received for foster care
- Relocation assistance benefits
- Income of live-in attendants
- Scholarships
- Student loans

- Personal property such as automobiles

### C. HOW TO VERIFY INCOME

To calculate income, the current gross income of the applicant is used to project that income over the next 12 months. Income verification documentation should include, but is not limited to the following for each and every member of a household who is 18 years of age or older:

- Four current consecutive pay stubs, including bonuses, overtime or tips, or a letter from the employer stating the present annual income figure or if self-employed, a current Certified Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet.
- A signed copy of regular IRS Form 1040 (Tax computation form), 1040A or 1040EZ (as applicable) and state income tax returns filed for the last three years prior to the date of interview or notarized tax waiver letter for respective tax year(s)
- A Form 1040 Tax Summary for the past three tax years can be requested from the local Internal Revenue Service Center or by calling 1-800-829-1040.
- If applicable, a letter or appropriate reporting form verifying monthly benefits such as:
  1. Social Security or SSI – Current award letter or computer printout letter
  2. Unemployment – verification of Unemployment Benefits
  3. Welfare -TANF current award letter
  4. Disability - Worker’s compensation letter or
  5. Pension income (monthly or annually) – a pension letter
  6. A letter or appropriate reporting form verifying any other sources of income claimed by the applicant, such as alimony or child support – copy of court order or recent original letters from the court (includes separation agreement or divorce papers) or education scholarship/stipends – current award letter;
- Reports from the last two consecutive months that verify income from assets to be submitted by banks or other financial institutions managing savings and checking accounts (bank statements and passbooks), trust funds, money market accounts, certificate of deposit, stocks or bonds (In brokerage accounts – most recent statements and/or in certificate form – photocopy of certificates). Examples include copies of all interest and dividend statements for savings accounts, interest and non-interest-bearing checking accounts, and investments;

- Evidence or reports of income from directly held assets, such as real estate or businesses owned by any household member 18 years and older.
- Interest in a corporation or partnership – Federal tax returns for each of the preceding three tax years.
- Current reports of assets – Market Value Appraisal or Realtor Comparative Market Analysis and Bank/Mortgage Co. Statement indicating Current Mortgage Balance. For rental property attach copies of all leases.

## **D. ADDITIONAL INCOME VERIFICATION PROCEDURES**

### **1. STUDENT INCOME**

Only full-time income of full-time students is included in the income calculation. A full-time student is a member of the household reported to the IRS as a dependent who is enrolled in a degree seeking program for 12 or more credit hours per semester; and part-time income is income earned on less than a 35-hour workweek.

### **2. INCOME FROM REAL ESTATE**

If real estate owned by an applicant for affordable housing is a rental property, the rent is considered income. After deduction of any mortgage interest, real estate taxes, property owner insurance and reasonable property management expenses as reported to the Internal Revenue Service, the remaining amount shall be counted as income.

If an applicant owns real estate, other than primary residence, the Program Case Manager should determine the imputed interest from the value of the property. The Program Case Manager should deduct outstanding mortgage debt from the documented market value established by either a market value appraisal or by applying the property tax equalization market value method, as well as real estate commission if property was to be sold. Based on current money market rates, interest will be imputed on the determined value of the real estate.

## **E. OTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Applicant to submit the following in the application package:

- Recorded deed to the property to be assisted;
- If you are a widow or widower, copy of Death Certificate should be included;
- Receipt for property taxes paid current.
- Signed Release form to verify eligibility determination from third party sources;
- Proof that all mortgage payments are current; and
- Copy of any and all other liens recorded against the property.

- Personal identification (a copy of any of the following Driver's License, Passport, Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, Adoption Papers, Alien Registration Card, etc.) for each household member.

#### **F. REQUIREMENTS OF UTILITIES & TAXES PAID CURRENT**

All applicants' water/sewer and tax accounts must be paid current.

#### **G, REQUIREMENTS OF WORK ITEMS**

Homeowner has to demonstrate the existing problem has been inspected and the threat verified by one of the following:

- The appropriate local construction official;
- A local health official; or
- Systems or components that have been red tagged by utility company and/or verified non-functional by a qualified service technician.

This is done at time of submission of the program application.

#### **G. ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

After Administrative Agent Program staff determines that the household is income eligible and meets all other eligible requirements, the Administrative Agent Program Manager will complete and sign the Eligibility Certification. This certification is valid for six months starting from date of eligibility certification. A Construction Agreement must be signed within this time period. If not, the Program Manager must reevaluate the household's eligibility.

- The Municipality Emergency Repair Assistance Program will provide a maximum loan of \$10,000.00. to each eligible homeowner. If property is sold prior to the fifth year, the loan becomes due upon change in ownership. After the fifth year, the loan shall be forgiven by 20% each year, up to year 10. After year 10, the loan will be completely forgiven.

## **2. ENERGY EFFECIENCY UPGRADES**

#### **A. ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

After the Administrative Agent Program staff determines that the household is income eligible and meets all other eligible requirements, the Administrative Agent Program Manager will complete and sign the Eligibility Certification. This certification is valid for six months starting from date of eligibility certification. A Construction Agreement must be signed within this time period. If not, the Program Manager must reevaluate the household's eligibility.

- The Municipality Energy Efficiency Program will provide a maximum loan of up to \$15,000 to each eligible homeowner. If property is sold prior to the fifth year, the loan becomes due upon

change in ownership. After the fifth year, the loan shall be forgiven by 20% each year, up to year 10. After year 10, the loan will be completely forgiven.

### **3. CREATION OF ADDITIONAL VERY LOW-INCOME UNITS PROGRAM PROCEDURE**

- A. Terms to be negotiated between landlord/developer and the Municipality.
- B. Upon approval of terms by both parties, Municipal attorney prepares Resolution authorizing award and terms, including changes in unit designation(s) from conversion of moderate and low-income units to very low-income units; revisions to restrictive covenant language, etc. Administrative Agent shall assist attorney upon request. See Exhibit 1.
- C. Municipality adopts Resolution.
- D. Municipality sends assistance directly to landlord/developer.
- E. Administrative Agent records assistance on master reporting spreadsheet.

### **4. FIRST MONTHS RENT ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES**

The Municipality will designate a portion of all development fees collected and interest earned towards a First Months Rent Grant program. This grant will be available to an income eligible renter with good credit standing who qualifies for a low- or moderate-income rental unit in one of the Municipality's deed restricted units or its Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program as per the following guidelines:

- The First Months Rent will be in the form of a grant equal to the first month's rental amount determined by the landlord and will be paid to the landlord on behalf of the tenant.
- The Municipality's First Months Rent Affordability Assistance Program will be administered by the Administrative Agent. After an applicant is income qualified by the Administrative Agent pursuant to New Jersey Fair Housing rules and UHAC, or cannot be qualified due to a need for assistance, an affordability assistance application will be completed and forwarded with all necessary documentation to the Administrative Agent. The affordability assistance recipient will sign a contract with municipality which states the amount of funds granted, procedures and duration and conditions of affordability assistance. All tenants of affordable units within the Municipality will be advised of the availability of the Municipality's Affordability Assistance Program. An income eligible occupant or applicant for an affordable unit within the municipality may not be denied participation in the Affordability Assistance Program(s) unless funding is no longer available.
- If the unit is a Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program unit, and a 10-year deed restriction was recorded on the unit at the completion of rehabilitation work and the restriction is still in effect at the time of the tenant's application for First Months Rent.
- The Municipality First Months Rent Program will provide a maximum grant in the amount of the first month's rent, not to exceed \$2,500.00.

### **5. DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES**

The Municipality Down Payment Assistance Program is designed to help low- and moderate-income households achieve the goal of homeownership. This program will provide a no interest, forgivable loan to homebuyers of deed restricted affordable properties within the Municipality to use as a principal down

payment and/or closing costs. The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance to income-qualified homebuyers moving to the Municipality.

### **ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

Applicants for this loan program must be income-qualified by the Administrative Agent for the Municipality and must be under contract to purchase a deed restricted home in the Municipality. This means that the applicant must have made application to buy a home, been income-qualified and selected to purchase an affordable home within the Municipality, and signed a contract with the seller.

### **ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

Properties must be within the Municipality and be deed restricted in accordance with the U.H.A.C. guidelines. The price of the home will be limited by the deed restriction to be affordable to either a low or moderate-income household.

### **LEVEL OF FINANCING**

The Municipality Down Payment Assistance Program will provide a maximum loan of \$10,000.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The loan is given as a zero-interest loan. If property is sold prior to the fifth year, the loan becomes due upon change in ownership. After the fifth year, the loan shall be forgiven by 20% each year, up to year 10. After year 10, the loan will be completely forgiven. The loan will be secured by a second mortgage and note.

Recipients of Down Payment Assistance Program funds are required to maintain the unit as their principal residence for the duration of the loan period and abide by all other requirements of the deed restriction and UHAC. In the event the property is sold or disposed of during the term of the loan, the outstanding loan amount in accordance with the schedule above shall be immediately due and payable to the Municipality according to the terms of the Mortgage and Mortgage Note.

### **SECURITY INSTRUMENTS**

Loans for all properties participating in the Down Payment Assistance Program shall be secured through a Mortgage and Mortgage Note (see Exhibit 3) in favor of the municipality executed by the property owner. The Municipality will record said documents with the County Clerk's office upon the completion of the closing of title. The Mortgage and Mortgage Note will be executed at closing. The original mortgage note shall be retained by the Municipality Clerk and kept in the unit file.

## **6. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES**

The Program is designed to help low and moderate-income homeowners retain stable finances. This program will provide a no interest, forgivable loan to homeowners of deed restricted affordable properties within the Municipality who are in arrears with mortgage payments, taxes, utility payments, special assessments, or homeowners' fees. Funds are made available through the Municipality's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance to income-qualified homeowners. This program will provide a no interest, forgivable loan to homebuyers of deed restricted affordable properties within the Municipality.

## **ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

Applicants for this loan program must be income-qualified by the Administrative Agent for the Municipality and must be the owner of an affordable housing unit in the Municipality.

## **ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

Properties must be within the Municipality and be deed restricted in accordance with the U.H.A.C. guidelines.

## **LEVEL OF FINANCING**

The Municipality Homeownership Assistance Program will provide a maximum loan of \$10,000.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The loan is given as a zero-interest loan. If property is sold prior to the fifth year, the loan becomes due upon change in ownership. After the fifth year, the loan shall be forgiven by 20% each year, up to year 10. After year 10, the loan will be completely forgiven. The loan will be secured by a second mortgage and note.

Recipients of Homeownership Assistance Program funds are required to maintain the unit as their principal residence for the duration of the loan period and abide by all other requirements of the deed restriction and UHAC. In the event the property is sold or disposed of during the term of the loan, the outstanding loan amount in accordance with the schedule above shall be immediately due and payable to the Municipality according to the terms of the Mortgage and Mortgage Note.

## **SECURITY INSTRUMENTS**

Loans for all properties participating in the Homeownership Assistance Program shall be secured through a Mortgage and Mortgage Note in favor of the municipality executed by the property owner. The Municipality will record said documents with the County Clerk's office upon the completion of appropriate forms. The Mortgage and Mortgage Note will be executed at closing. The original mortgage note shall be retained by the Municipality Clerk and kept in the unit file.