



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Accumulating the funds for downpayment and closing costs is a common barrier for potential homebuyers and often delays home ownership.

In Spring 2017, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) unveiled HomeSeeker, an ambitious new downpayment and closing cost assistance program.

The program is funded through federal Hardest Hit Funds and encourages homeownership in housing markets that have been hardest hit by foreclosures and helps to strengthen demand in those areas.

The program initially made available \$16 million to provide \$16,000 in interest-free forgivable loans toward a buyer's down payment or closings costs.

To get the word out about the new program and its benefits, NJHMFA launched a multipronged marketing program across traditional print and online media, social media and email, radio and free housing expo events open to the public in several key cities around the state, including Camden, Newark, Atlantic City and Trenton.

Outreach efforts

Graphics:

The HomeSeeker program was branded with a custom logo and photography. In publicizing homebuyer events, the overall campaign included event flyers (translated into English and Spanish for some events, as well as Polish for the Trenton event), print ads as well as graphics for Facebook, Twitter and online calendars on news sites (including Patch) and other community sites. The graphics were also tied in to an accompanying email campaign.

Email:

A series of email blasts announcing the HomeSeeker program's launch was created to reach a total of 6,000 email recipients. Targeted messaging was sent to mailing list segments that included 4,500 potential homebuyers and homeowners and 1,400 Realtors who sought information on NJHMFA homebuying programs and related events. These emails were incredibly well-received, boasting engagement rates that averaged 20% or greater.

Email was also used to send invitations for housing expo events that showcased HomeSeeker, providing easy access for recipients to register online. The event invitation emails focused on different aspects of the events such as homebuying classes, foreclosure assistance, as well as the opportunity to meet an array of invited vendors including: housing counselors, lenders, social service providers and county agencies. Key tips such as a list of important documents to bring and free parking information was also included. As the event dates neared, follow-up reminder emails were sent to registered attendees with helpful day-of tips, as well as to non-registrants reminding them to attend. Engagement rates for the event-related emails were also high, averaging around 26%.

Website:

To bolster awareness of the HomeSeeker program, NJHMFA launched a new, mobile-friendly, consumer-centric microsite: www.theroadhomenj.com

The microsite was built specifically to walk homebuyers through NJHMFA's current mortgage programs and present requirements in easy-to-understand layman's terms.

Built on the cutting-edge Bootstrap web framework, the site was mobile responsive, which means it automatically adapted to suit the device on which it was being viewed. Mobile responsiveness is an important feature to consider when marketing to millennials, as they do just about everything - including shopping for a home - on their mobile devices. According to the National Association of Realtors, in 2015, millennials made up 32 percent of the homebuyer market, and more than 50 percent of millennial homebuyers used a mobile device during their home search.

The site highlighted NJHMFA's down payment and closing cost assistance programs, leading with HomeSeeker. The site provided fast, one-click access to the list of participating lenders, so consumers could immediately inquire about purchasing through NJHMFA's programs. For homebuyers who may have been on the fence about buying, the site also showcased the agency's updated "*The Road Home New Jersey: Guide for the NJ Homebuyer*," a FREE, 36-page full color PDF booklet that outlines the home purchase process step-by-step, providing an in-depth homebuyer glossary, online resources and other helpful tools.

Media:

In publicizing homebuyer events, a general press release was sent to daily and weekly print outlets, as well as radio and online media. A shorter event promotion was posted, along with an event graphic and registration link, on public website calendars and as news items on sites that permitted user-generated content.

At the same time, ad buys were placed in local newspapers and their websites, in addition to paid Facebook campaigns. Shortened, trackable URLs were created for the event registration page to be able to track the effectiveness of the various media used.

PSA

Thirty- and 60-second PSAs were recorded with the NJHMFA executive director and made available to a statewide radio station for a six-month effort to promote the state's down payment and closing cost assistance program.

Social Media:

Information and graphics about the HomeSeeker program and homebuyer events were posted on Facebook to engage with and be shared by followers, as well as on LinkedIn.

In addition, the event materials were made available to all NJHMFA employees to share via their own personal social media channel. The materials were also sent to all state departments to share via their social media channels as well.

Public outreach:

In publicizing homebuyer events, a flyer, social media graphics and email pitch were sent to town clerks in every town of the county where each event was held, with a follow-up phone call. The clerks were asked if they could post the flyer in borough hall, share the social media graphics via the town's Facebook or Twitter feed if available, or use the material as a PSA on the town's local cable community access channel. In some cases, specially designed graphics were provided to meet the town's cable access requirements.

All county elected officials, such as the county executive or freeholder board, were emailed (with follow-up calls) the flyer and social media materials, asking them to share the event flyer in county offices, with constituents and on social media if possible. The same materials were also sent to the county administrator and relevant county officials, such as the housing or development departments.

The event flyer and social media materials were shared with every library in the county, asking them to post the flyer in the library for patrons or share via social media if possible.

All event and program materials were also shared with area state legislative offices and Congressional offices to share with their constituents, and they were also invited to have a table at the event.

In addition, the New Jersey Realtors group was asked to share the event materials with their members by relevant county.

Outcome:

Due the tremendous success of NJHMFA's down payment and closing cost program, it has since been rebranded and infused with \$10 million in additional funding and expanded statewide.

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

HomeSeeker

Category: Communications/Creative Media

VISUALS

NJHMFA Homepage Web Banner



The banner features a woman in a light-colored top holding a magnifying glass over her eye, with a thumbs-up gesture. To the left is the HomeSeeker logo, and to the right is promotional text.

HOME SEEKER
A PROGRAM OF THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY

**Get \$16,000
Toward Your
Home Purchase**

Learn more at:
www.theroadhomenj.com

HomeSeeker Logo:



New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

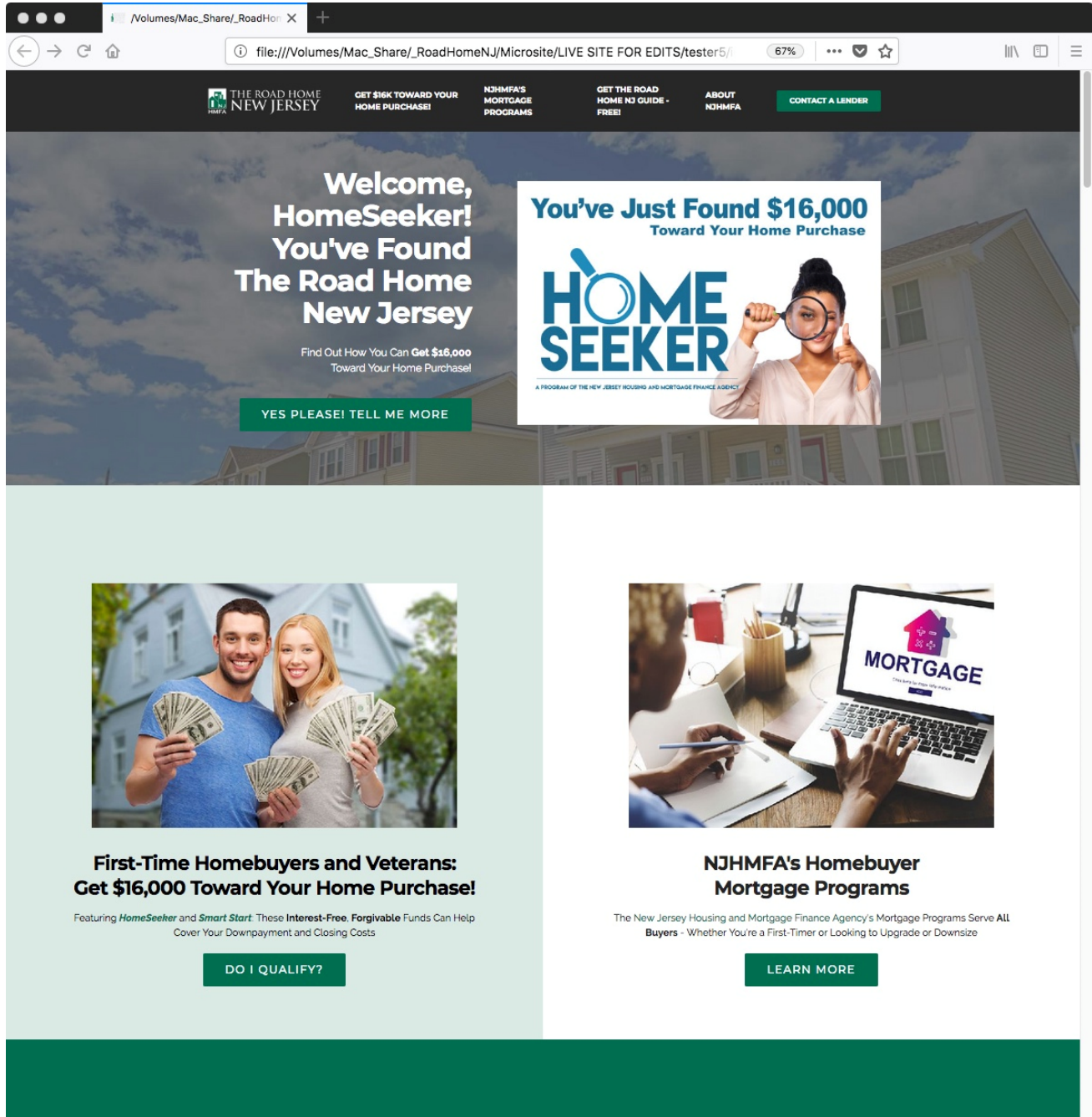
HomeSeeker

Category: Communications/Creative Media

HomeSeeker Facebook Graphic:



Road Home New Jersey website original homepage:



Road Home New Jersey website Page 2:

file:///Volumes/Mac_Share/RoadHomeNJ/Microsite/LIVE SITE FOR EDITS/tester5/ 67%

THE ROAD HOME NEW JERSEY GET \$16K TOWARD YOUR HOME PURCHASE! NJHMF'S MORTGAGE PROGRAMS GET THE ROAD HOME NJ GUIDE - FREE! ABOUT NJHMF CONTACT A LENDER

First-Timers: Where in New Jersey are You Looking to Buy?

Program Eligibility Depends on the County in Which Your Home is Located.
Choose One of the Programs Below.

HOME SEEKER

Get a Full \$16,000 Toward Your Purchase

Downpayment and/or Closing Cost Assistance for First-Time Buyers and Veterans Purchasing in:
Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic, or Union County

LEARN MORE

SMART START

Get Up to 4% of Your Mortgage Amount Toward Your Purchase

Downpayment and/or Closing Cost Assistance for First-Time Buyers in Any NJ County Purchasing Homes in Smart Growth Areas

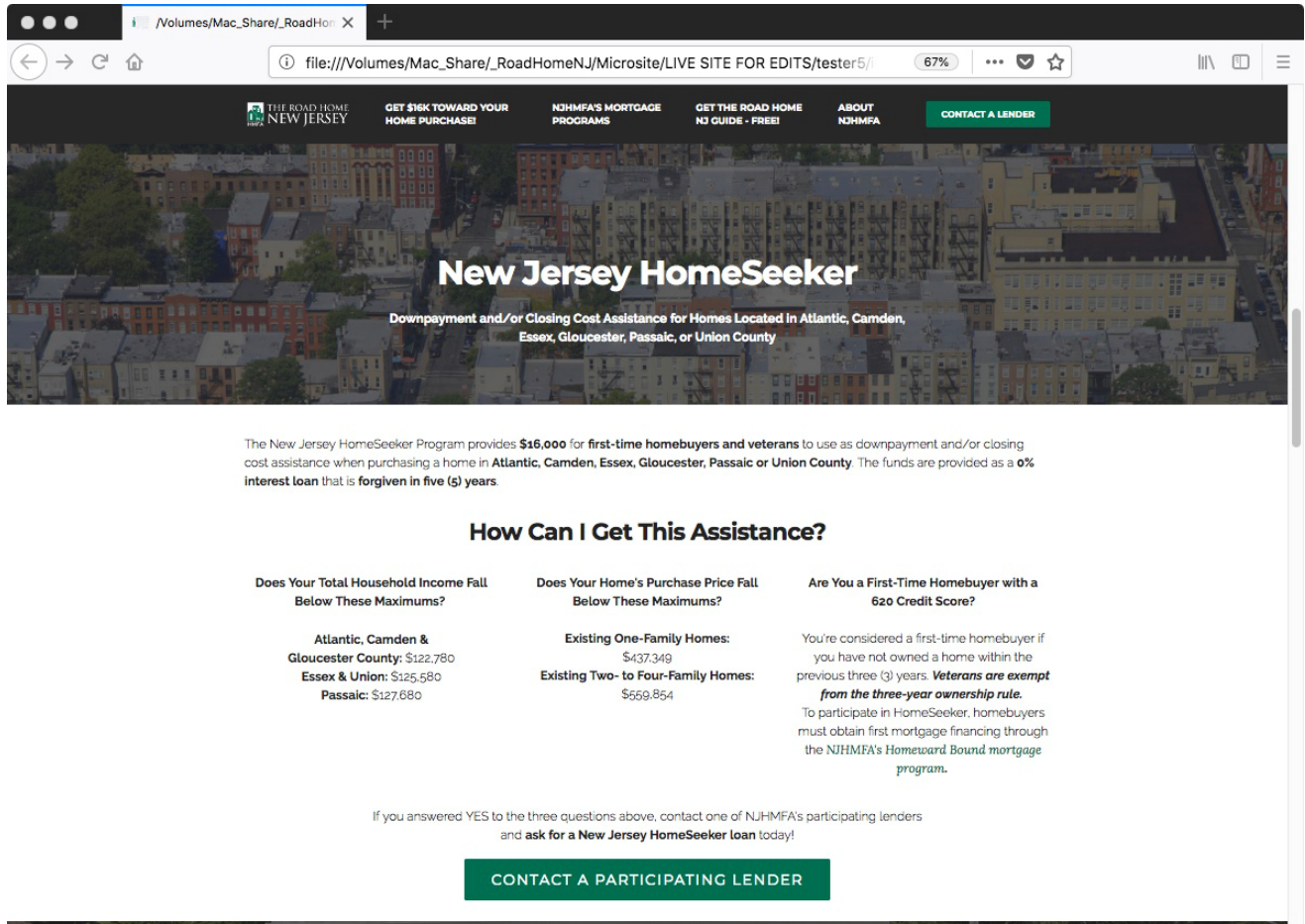
LEARN MORE

New Jersey HomeSeeker

Downpayment and/or Closing Cost Assistance for Homes Located in Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic, or Union County

The New Jersey HomeSeeker Program provides \$16,000 for first-time homebuyers and veterans to use as downpayment and/or closing cost assistance when purchasing a home in Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic or Union County. The funds are provided as a 0% interest loan that is forgiven in five (5) years.

Road Home New Jersey website Page 3:



NJ Realtors Full Page Ad April/May 2017

Congratulations! You've Just Found Your Buyer

\$16,000

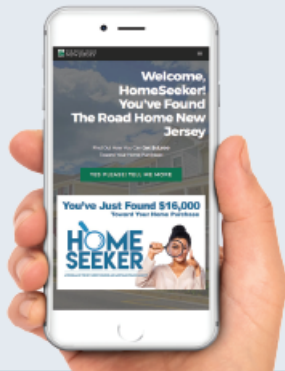
Toward Their New Jersey Home Purchase!

**HOME
SEEKER**

A PROGRAM OF THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY



Forgivable Downpayment Assistance for First-Time Buyers & Veterans
for Homes Located in Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union Counties



Discover Programs for All New Jersey Buyers on Our

NEW MOBILE-FRIENDLY WEBSITE

TheRoadHomeNJ.com

- Outlines More Forgivable Assistance Program Options
- Provides One-Click Access to Participating Lenders
- Includes FREE 36-Page "Guide for the NJ Homebuyer"

Get FREE Copies of Our Guide for the NJ Homebuyer Today!

Contact Jesse Crawford, Lender Outreach Coordinator
at 609-278-7587 or jcrawford@njhmfa.gov

WWW.THEROADHOMENJ.COM



MidAtlantic Real Estate Journal ad, July 2017

Attention Homebuyers: Apply Now to Get

\$16,000

Toward Your New Jersey Home Purchase!

**HOME
SEEKER**

A PROGRAM OF THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY



HomeSeeker Offers

Forgivable Downpayment Assistance for First-Time Buyers & Veterans

for Homes Located in Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union Counties

Discover More Forgivable Assistance Programs and Find a Participating Lender at

www.TheRoadHomeNJ.com



NJHMFA HomeSeeker Consumer Fact Sheet (2 pages)

NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY



HOMESEEKER
DOWNPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONSUMER FACT SHEET

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
The HomeSeeker Down Payment ("DPA") Program will provide a \$16,000 incentive to qualified homebuyers to purchase a primary residence in targeted areas in New Jersey. HomeSeeker DPA loans are only available to eligible homebuyers who obtain first mortgage financing through the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency's ("NJHMFA") Homeward Bound Homebuyer Mortgage Program at www.theroadhome.nj.com.

AVAILABLE FUNDS
\$16,000,000 of federal Hardest Hit Funds (HHF) are allocated for this program to assist approximately 1,000 homebuyers.

DURATION OF PROGRAM
The program will continue until December 31, 2020 or until funding is fully reserved, whichever comes first.

PROGRAM GOAL
The goal of the HomeSeeker DPA Program is to provide a \$16,000 incentive to homebuyers to choose a property within a targeted hardest hit neighborhood. Encouraging homeownership in housing markets that have been hardest hit by foreclosures will strengthen demand in those areas, stabilize the housing market and prevent future foreclosures.

TARGET AREAS
NJHMFA evaluated all 21 New Jersey counties and identified the targeted areas based on seriously delinquent mortgage loans, negative equity, short sales, REO sales and foreclosures.

The following counties are targeted and eligible for this program:
Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union

BORROWER ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible borrower(s) must qualify and meet all requirements for an NJHMFA first mortgage loan, Homeward Bound Homebuyer Mortgage Program, originated through an NJHMFA participating lender.
- The Borrower(s) must be a first-time homebuyer.
 - A first-time homebuyer is defined as someone who has not had an ownership interest in their primary residence during the previous three (3) years.
- Veterans are exempt from the three (3) year ownership rule and are granted a Veteran's Exception.
- Borrowers must meet the minimum FICO score of 620.

1-800-NJ-HOUSE  WWW.NJHOUSING.GOV 

NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY

- Borrower(s) may not possess enough liquid assets to close a mortgage loan at less than 80% LTV.
- Any Borrower in violation of the Dodd-Frank Act for having been convicted of a mortgage related felony in the past ten years is ineligible.
- Any Borrower receiving HomeSeeker DPA funds will not be eligible for other down payment assistance programs offered by the NJHMFA.

INCOME LIMITS

The Borrower(s) must not exceed 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Income is based on the total household income. The maximum limits are as follows in the individual counties:

- Atlantic, Camden & Gloucester - \$127,680
- Essex & Union - \$131,880
- Passaic - \$135,100

PURCHASE PRICE LIMITS

The property must not exceed the maximum purchase price limit in all counties of \$437,349 for existing one family dwellings or \$559,854 for existing two to four family dwellings.

OCCUPANCY

Property must be occupied as the borrower's primary residence within 60 days of closing. Borrower must maintain occupancy for the life of the HomeSeeker DPA loan.

PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

- Property must be a single-family home, condominium, townhome, manufactured or mobile home which is permanently affixed to real property owned by the Borrower, or a two to four family dwelling unit of which one unit is to be occupied by the mortgagee or as his or her principal residence.

- Property must be the Borrower's primary residence.
- Property must be an existing residential dwelling.
- New construction is not permitted.

HOUSING COUNSELING

All Borrowers must receive housing counseling through a HUD approved housing counseling agency. Housing counseling is required prior to loan closing and it is the Borrower's responsibility to provide a Homebuyer Education Certificate as proof of counseling to their lender. This certificate is required to be included in the loan closing package. To find a HUD approved counseling agency visit HUD.gov enter "NJ Housing Counselors" in the search box and you will be directed to the list. HUD counseling agencies may charge reasonable and customary fees to provide homebuyer education. All counseling fees are the responsibility of the Borrower.

LOAN TERMS

The NJHMFA will make HomeSeeker DPA loans for down payment assistance, including closing costs, in the amount of \$16,000 to qualified borrowers purchasing in the target areas listed above. The interest rate on the HomeSeeker DPA second mortgage is 0% for a five (5) year forgivable term. There will not be an add on to the interest rate of the first mortgage. Interest rates for NJHMFA first mortgages can be obtained from an NJHMFA participating lender, the list of which can be found at www.theroadhomenj.com. The Note and the Mortgage are closed in New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency's name and not the lender's. The borrower may repay the unpaid principal in full or in part at any time before it is due. If the Borrower continuously resides in the premises, as their principal residence for five (5) years from the date of the closing of the loan, the loan will be deemed satisfied and a cancellation of mortgage/release of lien will be issued to the Borrower. If the Borrower conveys, refinances or ceases to occupy the premises as their principal residence, all of the unforgiven loan funds will be due and payable from net equity proceeds.

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
WWW.THEROADHOMENJ.COM
OR CALL 1-800-NJ-HOUSE.**

1-800-NJ-HOUSE  WWW.NJHOUSING.GOV



For up-to-date information, 24-hours a day, visit us online at www.njhousing.gov • Updated 5.22.17

NJHMFA HomeSeeker Consumer FAQ



A PROGRAM OF THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY

HOMESEEKER FAQ

WHAT IS THE NJ HOMESEEKER DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) has allotted \$16 million in federal funds for the HomeSeeker Down Payment Assistance ("DPA") program which provides a \$16,000 incentive to qualified homebuyers to purchase a primary residence in target areas in New Jersey.

HOW DOES IT BENEFIT ME?

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria for the HomeSeeker DPA program will be eligible to receive \$16,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance towards the purchase of a primary residence in one of six (6) counties: Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union ("Target Areas").

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HOMESEEKER DPA PROGRAM?

To be eligible, borrowers must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Borrower(s) must purchase and occupy a residential home in a target area.
- Borrower(s) must qualify and meet all requirements for a NJHMFA first mortgage loan originated through a participating lender.
- Borrower(s) must be a first-time homebuyer. A first-time homebuyer is defined as someone who has not had an ownership interest in their primary residence during the previous three (3) years. Veterans are exempt from the three (3) year ownership rule and are granted a Veteran's Exception.
- Borrower(s) must meet the minimum FICO score and debt-to-income (DTI) rules as listed in the Policy and Procedures for Participating Lenders (Seller's Guide).
- Borrower cannot have been convicted of a mortgage related felony in the past ten years.
- Borrower(s) must not exceed 140% of the Area Median Income. Income is based on the total household income.
The maximum limits are as follows in the individual counties:
Atlantic, Camden & Gloucester - \$127,680;
Essex & Union - \$131,880; Passaic - \$135,100
- Borrower's purchase price must not exceed the maximum purchase price limit in all counties of \$437,349 for existing one family dwellings or \$559,854 for existing two to four family dwellings.
- Borrower(s) may not possess enough liquid assets to close a mortgage loan at less than 80% LTV.

WHAT TYPE OF PROPERTY CAN BE PURCHASED?

The property must be a single-family home, condominium, townhome, manufactured or mobile home which is permanently affixed to real property owned by the Borrower, or a two to four family dwelling unit of which one unit is to be occupied by the Borrower as his or her principal residence. The property must also be an existing residential dwelling. New construction is not permitted.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM?

To apply for the HomeSeeker DPA program please contact a participating NJHMFA lender. The list of participating lenders can be found online at www.theroadhomenj.com.

IS THIS A MORTGAGE?

This program will provide a forgivable subordinate mortgage. This means that as long as the applicant abides by the terms of the HomeSeeker DPA program, including maintaining the home as their primary place of residence for a five (5) year period, the assistance will be forgiven. There are no monthly payments on this mortgage.

CAN I USE ANY BANK OR FINANCE COMPANY FOR MY MORTGAGE?

Only NJHMFA's participating lenders can be used to obtain a mortgage for this program. The list of participating lenders can be found online at www.theroadhomenj.com.

CAN I USE HOMESEEKER DPA TO PURCHASE A HOUSE LOCATED IN A COUNTY OTHER THAN THE TARGET AREAS?

No. Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union are the only counties designated as HomeSeeker Target Areas. If you wish to purchase a house outside of the Target Areas, you may qualify for the NJHMFA Smart Start program. Learn more about your options at www.theroadhomenj.com.

HOW WERE THE TARGET AREAS CHOSEN?

NJHMFA evaluated all 21 New Jersey counties and identified the six (6) target areas based on seriously delinquent mortgage loans, negative equity, short sales, REO sales, foreclosures and Single Family loan originations.

IS HOUSING COUNSELING A CONDITION OF THE HOMESEEKER PROGRAM?

All Borrowers must receive housing counseling through a HUD approved housing counseling agency. Housing counseling is required prior to loan closing and it is the Borrower's responsibility to provide a Homebuyer Education Certificate as proof of counseling to their lender. This certificate is required to be included in the loan closing package. To find a HUD approved counseling agency visit HUD.gov, enter "NJ Housing Counselors" in the search box and you will be directed to the list. HUD counseling agencies may charge reasonable and customary fees to provide homebuyer education. All counseling fees are the responsibility of the Borrower.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HOMESEEKER PROGRAM, VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.THEROADHOMENJ.COM



NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY
WWW.NJHOUSING.GOV

South Jersey Times print ad for Camden Home Buyer Expo, August 2017:

CAMDEN HOME BUYER EXPO



**Tuesday,
August 1, 2017
6PM-8PM**

Rutgers University - Camden
Campus Center Building
326 Penn Street, Camden NJ 08102
Free Parking at 601 Cooper St. Garage

Presented by



**NEW JERSEY HOUSING
AND MORTGAGE
FINANCE AGENCY**
HMFA WWW.NJHOUSING.GOV

ARE YOU READY TO BUY A HOME?
Attend our FREE home buyer class from 6pm-8pm
and find out how you can get \$16,000 in forgivable financing
through the NEW HomeSeeker program!

CLASS TOPICS INCLUDE:
Finding out what you can afford
How to apply for a mortgage
What you should know about a home inspection
and much more!

TALK TO THE EXPERTS - FREE!
At the event, you'll also have the opportunity to meet
one-on-one with lenders and other housing professionals
to ask questions and learn about other available
financing options!

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY AT:
<http://bit.ly/aug1camden>

Camden Home Buyer Expo flyer, August 2017:

CAMDEN HOME BUYER EXPO



Presented by



TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2017
6PM - 8PM
Rutgers University - Camden
Campus Center Building
326 Penn Street • Camden, NJ, 08102
Free Parking at the 601 Cooper Street Garage

ARE YOU READY TO BUY A HOME?
Attend our FREE home buyer class from 6pm-8pm and find out how you can get \$16,000 in forgivable financing through the NEW HomeSeeker program!

CLASS TOPICS INCLUDE:
Finding out what you can afford
How to apply for a mortgage
What you should know about a home inspection, and much more!

TALK TO THE EXPERTS - FREE!
At the event, you'll also have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with lenders and other housing professionals to ask questions and learn about other available financing options!

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY AT:
<http://bit.ly/aug1camden>

Camden Home Buyer Expo Web ad, Atlantic City Press, August 2017

CAMDEN
HOME BUYER EXPO

Tuesday, August 1, 2017
6-8PM • Rutgers Univ. Camden

FREE HOME BUYER CLASS
Get \$16,000 for a downpayment

Presented by  **NEW JERSEY HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE AGENCY**
HMFA WWW.NJHOUSING.GOV

The advertisement features a background image of a hand holding a key with a house-shaped keychain. The text is primarily in green and white, with a yellow border around the 'FREE HOME BUYER CLASS' text.

Camden Home Buyer Expo Facebook ad, August 2017

YOUR LOGO YourPageHere
Sponsored Like Page

Looking to buy a home? Learn how at the FREE Home Buyer Expo at Rutgers Camden August 1st!

CAMDEN
HOME BUYER EXPO
Aug 1 • 6-8pm • Rutgers - Camden

Camden Homebuyer Expo 8/1
Homebuyer Class & Expert Help

PRESENTED BY NJHOUSING.GOV Learn More

20 562 Comments 311 Shares

Like Comment Share

The Facebook ad features a blurred background image of a hand holding a key with a house-shaped keychain. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with the event name and date prominently displayed.