

# Growing Greene



News from **Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning**

Spring 2009

## Greene County Launches Workforce Homeownership Program

Greene County received \$450,000 in funding from the New York State Office of Community Renewal in 2008 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to assist eligible low to moderate income households to become first-time homeowners. To participate, applicants must either live or work in Greene County, and all homes purchased must be located in Greene County.

**TERMS OF ASSISTANCE:** The Homeownership Program will provide basic assistance of up to 20% of the purchase price plus up to \$3,750 in closing costs. Program participants must be paying a minimum of 23% of income to housing in the first year. *The maximum financial assistance to participants is \$30,000, including closing cost assistance.*

Financial assistance is provided as a deferred-payment loan over a term of 15 years at 0% interest. If the homeowner lives in the house throughout the loan term, the loan converts to a grant and is forgiven. Participants must provide a minimum of \$1,500 or 2% of the purchase price (whichever is greater) of their own funds for the home purchase. These funds cannot be gifts; participants must demonstrate the savings. All homes purchased must be on a permanent foundation and cost no more than the State of New York Mortgage Agency single-family maximum for Greene County.

All participants must be able to obtain a mortgage for the remainder of the purchase price from a private financial institution. There are several mortgage lenders which have set aside mortgage funds and created enhanced terms for the Program participants, but households are not required to use a participating lender.

## County Partners with Catskill Mountain Housing for Homeownership Program

The County has contracted with Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation (CMHDC), the county's Rural Preservation Company, to provide counseling and application-related services for the Workforce Homeownership Program. CMHDC has considerable homeownership program experience, and is a Federally-certified homeownership counseling agency.

The Workforce Homeownership Program funds are provided as a deferred-payment loan at 0% interest, which is forgiven if the homeowner lives in the home for



15 years. Participants will be required to pay their first mortgage, taxes, insurance and other expenses based on their financial institution's policies.

Participants are required to receive counseling and education about homeownership. All required counseling and education sessions are free to program participants, except for the \$15 cost of the program book.

National studies have shown that training and education are critical to the success of low-moderate income homebuyers. People who have completed education and training not only better understand the responsibilities of homeownership, but are far more informed about financing, budgeting and the complex nature of real estate transactions.



## Housing Prices Continue to Rise

Greene County has had the fastest-rising housing prices of any county in New York State during the first half of the 2000's. The continued positive economic and demographic news in Greene County has supported housing prices.

According to the New York State Association of Realtors, Greene County's median housing price in November 2008 was \$198,500, just below the New York State median of \$205,000. As recently as 2000, Greene County's median housing price was below \$100,000, so there has been substantial appreciation in housing prices during the decade.



Greene County continues to experience in-migration from every other Hudson Valley county, which is a tribute to our affordable housing prices and high quality of life.

## How the Greene County Workforce Homeownership Program Works

The Workforce Homeownership Program assists low-moderate income households to become homeowners in our communities. Despite downturns in the national housing market, home purchases remain solid investments that help people build financial equity, as well as personal equity in the community. Homeowners tend to be more involved in their communities, supporting the local PTA, fire department and ambulance corps.

The Workforce Homeownership Program has obtained \$450,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide this assistance. It is anticipated that 15 households will be assisted with deferred-payment loans that convert into grants if the homeowner remains in the house for at least 15 years. Funding for those mortgages will be available on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds are exhausted. Once program funds are exhausted, no new commitments may be made until additional funds become available.

Applications are available from Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning or at the web site [www.greenebusiness.com](http://www.greenebusiness.com). They are also available from Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation at 448 Main Street in Catskill, or by calling 943-6700.

## For additional information or to apply:

Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning  
411 Main Street, Catskill, NY 12414  
Phone: 518-719-3290  
Fax: 518-719-3789  
[www.greenebusiness.com](http://www.greenebusiness.com)

Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation  
448 Main Street, Catskill, NY 12414.  
Phone: 518-943-6700  
Fax: 518-943-0113  
[www.cmhdc.org](http://www.cmhdc.org)

Funding commitments are made by Greene County, and are not final until approved by the Greene County Legislature. Funding is provided by the U.S.



Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through a grant provided by the New York State Office of Community Renewal.

*"Being a legislator and a real estate agent, I know that it is critical for people who work in the County to be able to purchase homes here. Property values are supported throughout the community, new businesses are created and more visitors come, and people's income rise."*

**Karen Deyo**  
Chairperson, Greene County  
Government Operations Committee

For more information, contact  
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411 Main Street, Catskill, NY 12414  
Phone: 518-719-3290