

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Pre-Purchase Homeownership Counseling in Four LifeSkills Sessions

This four-session course is mandatory for all participants in the program. The Homeownership staff is certified by the NeighborWorks Center for Homeownership Education and Counseling. The MORPC Homeownership program is certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the city of Columbus. The Homeownership Manager will host and/or teach the courses along with guest speakers, who are professionals in their fields and volunteer their time to teach selected sessions. Group sessions are offered in cycles, allowing participants to join at any point in time. Sessions are offered monthly except for August, November and December when no classes are held. Participants receive certification at the end of participation in all four courses. Most down payment assistance programs require certification from a homeownership program. Each session is two hours long except for the Home Maintenance & Repair course, which lasts for five and one-half hours. Sessions covered in LifeSkills classes deal with giving participants exposure to the wider ramifications of homeownership. Topics include:

Understanding Your Credit/Budgeting and Money Management: Participants learn how to read and understand their credit report. They learn the difference between collections, judgements, slow pays, and inquiries. They further learn how to understand the necessary steps to establish payment plans and schedule ways to pay off bad debt.

Also in this session, clients concentrate on effective money management using net income. This includes record keeping and its importance, goal setting, and credit use and abuses. Participants will be taught how to track monthly income and expenses. They will learn the importance of saving and establishing positive credit histories.

Home Inspection and Homeowner's Insurance: This session brings in a licensed home inspector who speaks on the need of home inspections and why they should be done before closing on the home loan. The inspector also covers how to find a reputable home inspector, what to look for in the service and what features make for a good home inspection. This session includes a speaker who



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is an insurance agent. The insurance agent helps participants determine what types of homeowner insurance are necessary for them.

Realtor/Mortgage and Predatory Lending: This session walks the participants through the actual home- buying process. Participants learn how to choose a realtor and the responsibilities and fiduciary duties of the seller's versus the buyer's agent. A mortgage loan originator attends the session and clarifies the home-buying jargon including PMI, MIP, conventional loan vs. non-conventional, FHA, VA, and other loan products, closing, PITI, loan-to-debt-ratio, etc.

The session also covers the pitfalls of predatory lending. Some of the topics include how lenders target low-income families residing in low-income areas and the characteristics of a predatory lender. Refinancing is discussed so those clients are informed in making good decisions related to refinancing debt.

Home Maintenance & Repair: This day-long session sponsored by Huntington National Bank highlights home maintenance and repair. In this hands-on session, participants learn common plumbing and electrical repair, drywall patching, caulking, tile replacement, and much more. This session also covers when it is best to *"leave it to a professional."* How to bid, what to look for in contracting for services and information about the Better Business Bureau are also covered. Each client receives a Sunset *"Home Repair"* book.

QuickStart in One Session

In addition to MORPC's LifeSkills program, MORPC also provides QuickStart. This program is designed to counsel homebuyers who did not seek out a counseling agency prior to signing a sales contract or becoming approved by a lender. QuickStart covers four topics: Maintaining a Budget after Homeownership, Preventing Foreclosure, Predatory Lending/Refinancing and What to Expect at Closing. Clients are encouraged to seek out post-purchase counseling opportunities.

Lenders refer clients to this training prior to closing for the certification. These sessions are intended only for client with credit scores above 620, are receiving a conventional loan and/or have less than 14 days to closing. Call 233-4176 to register.

(This session is not recommended for most first time homebuyers and is done on a case-by-case basis only. Please contact MORPC staff to see if you qualify. There is a fee for this session)



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