

Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan Homeownership Program



Everything You Need to Know About Becoming a Habitat Homeowner

Table of Contents

About Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan	2
What we do	2
Important Information About Us	2
Housing Continuum.....	2
The Habitat Homeownership Program	3
How to Qualify for Homeownership.....	3
How our Homeownership Program Works	4
Financial Information	5
Monthly Mortgage and Property Tax Payments	5
Foreclosure	6
Other Homeowner Expenses	7
Property Taxes.....	7
Home Insurance.....	7
Homeownership Housing Guidelines	8
Home Builds or Homes for Sale	8
Modesty Guidelines and National Occupancy Standards	8
Application Process.....	9
Understanding Program Information	9
Homeowner Services Contact Information	10
When to Contact Us	10
Homeowner Services Department	10
Habitat Saskatchewan Website.....	10

About Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan

What we do

We bring people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Important Information About Us

Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan is a nonprofit housing organization powered by passionate volunteers, generous donors, committed community partners, and dedicated staff.

As a charity, we rely on the support of our community, government funding, and other contributions to make affordable homeownership possible for families across the province. Every donation, volunteer hour, and partnership plays a vital role in building safe, stable homes and stronger communities.

Because building homes requires significant funding, we may not be able to start new projects or accept new families every year. When that happens, families may be placed on a waitlist until we are ready to select new homeowners.

We also operate Habitat ReStores across Saskatchewan — nonprofit home improvement stores that sell new and gently used items. Revenue from ReStores helps cover our operational and administrative costs, allowing more of our fundraising dollars to directly support building homes and serving families.

Housing Continuum



Owning a home through Habitat Saskatchewan is a unique opportunity that fits within Canada's Housing Continuum, which highlights different housing options.

At the beginning of the continuum is social housing, which is government-supported and helps low-income individuals and families. Next comes renting, which offers flexibility but doesn't allow families to build equity.

Habitat Saskatchewan's affordable homeownership program offers a unique path between renting and buying on the open market. Families can purchase a home without a down payment, and monthly payments are set at an affordable level based on household income. This approach makes homeownership possible for families who might otherwise be shut out by the high costs and financial barriers of the traditional market.

Our program helps families move toward full homeownership, creating long-term stability, the opportunity to build equity, and the security that renting or social housing can't provide. A safe, affordable home also improves health, education, and financial resilience while strengthening entire communities.

The Habitat Homeownership Program

How to Qualify for Homeownership

To qualify for homeownership with Habitat Saskatchewan, you must match the following criteria to be eligible:

Minimum Requirements

- ✓ Applicants moving into Habitat homes must be Canadian citizens, landed immigrants or permanent residents, and have lived in the Saskatchewan region for one year or more.
- ✓ At least one of the applicants must be employed full-time and have a stable source of income for one year or more.
- ✓ You and your family must be able to manage debt in a responsible way and have not declared bankruptcy in the last three years (must have been discharged two or more years ago).
- ✓ Applicants must have at least one child under the age of 16 years old.



Ability to Pay

- ✓ At least one member in the household has stable employment.
- ✓ Can afford monthly mortgage payments, not to exceed 25% of the family's total gross annual household income (employment income, disability income, child tax benefits, GST rebates, child support, spousal support, etc.).
- ✓ No overwhelming debt (total gross debt ratio should be below 40%, this is based off your income and expenses).
- ✓ Household members must meet program asset limits. Do you have any money in savings?
- ✓ Not declared bankruptcy in the past three years.
- ✓ Your employment income is within our income requirements, with income not exceeding \$77,500 (the maximum income band is determined by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation). Your income must be sufficient to cover the costs of

homeownership and other financial obligations of the household, therefore Habitat Saskatchewan will determine the minimum income requirement base.

- ✓ Applicants must have a good credit rating with a good standing credit history (no collections or judgements against you).
- ✓ You are financially capable of purchasing a home at fair market value, while paying mortgage payments over a 30-year period.

Need for Affordable Housing

- ✓ Be living in core housing need (overcrowding, unsafe environment, unhealthy or unaffordable).
- ✓ Have children under the age of 18 that will benefit from a safe and decent home.
- ✓ Experiencing high rental payments (your basic shelter costs are more than 30% of your total household income).

Willingness to Partner

- ✓ Each family approved for the Habitat Housing Program becomes a partner in our work. Habitat families are our greatest ambassadors, and as such are asked to help with a variety of initiatives that advance our mission.
- ✓ Contribute 500 hours of volunteer work.
- ✓ Be an ambassador for Habitat Saskatchewan and represent the mission – this involves (1) understanding and agreeing with our model, (2) and speaking about your experience to help promote our organization's work to the public.
- ✓ Completing all homeowner education classes.
- ✓ Commit to Habitat Saskatchewan's partnership agreements, mortgage documents, and policies.

Please Note: The selection criteria and Habitat's Homeownership Program can change at any point. Please see the website for the most up to date information:

<https://habitatsaskatchewan.ca/homeownership/eligibility-info/>

How our Homeownership Program Works

Build: In the past, families who were selected as Habitat homeowners would help build their homes alongside Habitat staff, volunteers, future neighbors, and other community members. However, homes are currently constructed by a third-party contractor, so families no longer participate in the actual construction. Every build is unique!



Volunteer Hours: It is mandatory to complete a total of 500 volunteer hours prior to signing your mortgage. Volunteer hours can be completed through working at our ReStore, assisting in the landscaping, community events, and the Habitat Homeowner Education classes. You are required to complete a minimum of 25 hours in a month, and you will have

one year to complete the hours. You may have to take time off work to complete your hours.

Buy: Families purchase the home from Habitat at fair market value, with no down payment required. Mortgages are structured so that monthly payments are set at 25% of the household's gross annual income. Habitat homes are not free — families buy their homes and make regular mortgage payments, just like any other homeowner, but in a way that keeps homeownership affordable and sustainable.

Option to Purchase (Buy Back): The Option to Purchase is part of our mortgage agreement and allows Habitat Saskatchewan the first opportunity to buy back your home within the first 18 years of ownership if you decide to sell. While this option is in place, a buyback is not guaranteed — Habitat will only repurchase a home if it is financially viable for the organization.

If Habitat Saskatchewan decides not to buy back your property, you are then free to sell the home on the open market. If you do sell it on the open market, you are responsible for paying back the outstanding balance of your mortgage to Habitat Saskatchewan.

Habitat Ambassador: Being a Habitat homeowner also means being a Habitat Ambassador. By sharing your story and your journey, you help others see the importance of affordable housing and inspire them to get involved. Families are the heart of our mission and it's what motivates volunteers, donors, and community members to get involved.

Your role as a Habitat ambassador involves attending and possibly speaking at events, posing for photos, being in videos for our social media channels, telling your family's story, and spreading the word about Habitat's homeownership program to people in the community. We expect that you will attend your Sod Turning and Key Ceremony and have fun celebrating with us!

Reinvest: Mortgage payments are invested into a revolving fund, called the Fund for Humanity, which is used by Habitat Saskatchewan to build more homes in the community. Families helping other families, what a great concept!

Financial Information

Monthly Mortgage and Property Tax Payments

A Habitat homeowner is required to make consistent monthly mortgage and property tax payments. Condominium fees may also apply if you purchase a townhouse condo. Your monthly payment is always set at 25% of your family's total gross annual household income. Your payments are always subject to change annually based on a mandatory review of your family's income, especially if your income changes from year to year.

This mortgage calculator below gives an approximate outline of what a monthly mortgage and property tax payment combined could look like (This does not include condo fees, utilities, home insurance, and other homeowner expenses):

Gross Annual Household Income Amount	Approximate Monthly Payment Including Property Taxes
\$45,000	\$900
\$50,000	\$1,050
\$55,000	\$1,150
\$60,000	\$1,250
\$65,000	\$1,350
\$70,000	\$1,450

Therefore, if your gross annual household income is \$45,000, your monthly mortgage and property tax payment combined would be \$900/month.

The calculation is as follows:

$\$45,000 \times 25\%$, divided by 12 = \$900

If you make more than the maximum income requirement once you are a homeowner, your mortgage payment will continue to be set at 25% of your gross annual household income, based on your annual review of your family's income. We never put a cap on your mortgage payment - if you start making more money every year, your mortgage will increase. For example, if you make \$80,000, you can expect your monthly payment to be approximately \$1,650.

Foreclosure

Foreclosure occurs if you fail to pay your mortgage and property taxes over an extended period. This means that Habitat Saskatchewan can legally take back ownership of your home and that you will have to move out of the property.

This is a very lengthy, legal process that no one wants to go through or experience. If the foreclosure goes through, you will have this as a hit to your credit score and it would be hard to get a loan from a bank going forward. This would not be good for you and your family's financial success, stress level, and future.

This option is only considered after every other step has been explored. Before it reaches that point, Habitat Saskatchewan works closely with families to create a plan to help them get back on track. We do everything we can to support families who may be experiencing challenges in keeping up with their mortgage payments.

Other Homeowner Expenses

New Home Warranty: Upon purchasing your new home, you will have a one-time expense for the New Home Warranty which is approximately \$600-\$650. This mandatory program is designed for new homeowners to use for the first year from when they move into their property up to one year from that date. It covers specific home deficiencies that are identified within the first year of homeownership and will be rectified within that year.

Title Transfer: When you sign your mortgage with Habitat Saskatchewan, you will be responsible for a title transfer fee of approximately \$1,000 to officially transfer the property title into your name and become the homeowner.

Lawyer Fee: You will be responsible for paying approximately \$300-\$600 to a lawyer who will work on your behalf in the sale transaction of the property when you sign your mortgage.

Condominium Fees: Condo fees (when applicable) are approximately \$200-\$250 a month. This might include outside maintenance, common property insurance, reserve fund, garbage and recycling pick-up, and property management costs.

Utilities: Every homeowner is responsible for hooking up the heat, electricity, sewer, and water utilities. When you own a home the amount you pay each month might be higher than what you are used to, so keep that in mind.

Other: Maintenance and repairs to your property are yours to pay once you become the homeowner. Owning a home comes with a big financial responsibility; especially when your furnace dies and you need to purchase a new one. Having savings for big items is important.

Property Taxes

- Are included in your monthly mortgage payment.
- Are determined by the city you live in and are subject to increase annually.
- In Saskatchewan, they are approximately \$150-\$350 per month.

Home Insurance

- Covers your belongings and property.
- Is mandatory as a homeowner and must be renewed yearly.
- Is a requirement of your mortgage and you must provide proof of insurance each year upon renewal.
- Can range from \$200-\$300 per year for a condo townhouse and \$2,000-\$3,000 per year approximately for a single-family home. We encourage you to shop around for the best price when it comes to home insurance.
- Is not included in your mortgage payment.

As you can see, homeownership is a big financial responsibility and is not right for everyone. You need to figure out if you can budget for all expenses and know that your family will be successful before making this decision.

Homeownership Housing Guidelines

Home Builds or Homes for Sale

- Habitat Saskatchewan picks where to build based mostly on the land available to us.
- House design: We are not custom builders. Once the house design is approved by our board, it is final. The family we partner with doesn't get to choose the design, layout, or even the neighborhood it is being built in.
- You might not have the option of a newly built home as we may offer our families a home that has been previously lived in but recently renovated.
- We ultimately decide what is best for your family based on several factors.

Modesty Guidelines and National Occupancy Standards

To receive government funding from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Habitat Saskatchewan must comply with the Modesty Guidelines and National Occupancy Standards. This funding is essential for building homes that support families in need.

Modesty Guidelines

Our homes are designed and built to be modest, meaning they adhere to specific size requirements and are constructed with specific amenities, finishes, and materials.

The following items are considered non-essential and will not be included in any Habitat home:

- Dishwashers
- Garages
- Air conditioning

However, we do provide essential appliances, such as a fridge, stove, washer, and dryer, to meet the basic needs of our homeowners.

The National Occupancy Standards

These standards are used to establish the number of bedrooms that are suitable for a household based on the total number of family members, their gender, age, and marital status. This formula helps us to determine what is suitable in relation to the family size.

The standard formula to determine Bedroom Count is:

- A maximum of two and a minimum of one person per bedroom.
- Household members 18 years of age and older require a separate bedroom unless married or cohabitating as spouses.
- Parents/couples occupy a bedroom separate from their children.
- Children aged five and older of the opposite sex do not share a bedroom.

Application Process

Step 1: Program Information and Eligibility

- ✓ Visit the website to watch the educational homeownership video to get details about the program and what it takes to qualify. We do not have a application waitlist but we can put your contact details on our expression of interest form in order to be contact for future information sessions.
- ✓ When Habitat Saskatchewan is ready to start looking for future families to partner with, the chance to fill out our pre-liminary application will be available.
- ✓ If you are asked to fill out a pre-liminary application, you will be required to let us know about your family dynamic, employment and income, debt details, current housing situation, expenses and assets.

Step 2: Full Application

- ✓ Qualified families will be provided with a full application form once Habitat Saskatchewan has determined that you are eligible.
- ✓ To complete a full application, you will need to provide a comprehensive overview of your family situation, financial details including your credit history and income, housing needs, and your commitment to partnering with Habitat. We will request thorough documentation to support your application, allowing us to carefully assess whether your family is a good fit for our program.
- ✓ The application form must be submitted to Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan office in Regina via email at homeownerservices@habitatsask.ca, or by mail at 101-1445 Park Street, Regina SK, S4N 4C5.
- ✓ You can contact us at the email above if help is required regarding your application or if you have general questions.

Step 3: Review Process

- ✓ Only completed applications will be considered.
- ✓ The review process will include interviews, home visits, reference checks, and credit checks.
- ✓ Every application will be reviewed fairly and equally.
- ✓ All applicants will be notified of the decision.

Please Note: *The only time we hand out applications is in a family selection period when we have homes for sale or when we are currently building.*

Understanding Program Information

If English is not your first language and you find any part of this information difficult to understand, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or community resource who can help explain it in your preferred language.

Homeowner Services Contact Information

When to Contact Us

The Homeowner Services Department encourages families to contact us if you have any questions about the program.

Location and Hours of Operation:

The Homeowner Services Department is open from Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. We are closed on statutory holidays.

Head Office:

101-1445 Park St, Regina SK, S4N 4C5

Homeowner Services Department

If you need to contact the Homeowner Services Department, please contact:



homeownerservices@habitatsask.ca



(306) 347-4653

Habitat Saskatchewan Website

To help you determine if Habitat's Homeownership Program is the right fit for you and to find out if you qualify, we encourage you to watch our informational video available in the homeownership section of our website. You can visit us at www.habitatsaskatchewan.ca.